

Progressing Good Relations and Reconciliation in Post-Agreement Northern Ireland

Gráinne Kelly



Progressing Good Relations and Reconciliation in Post-Agreement Northern Ireland

by Gráinne Kelly
INCORE, University of Ulster

First Published February 2012

by INCORE (International Conflict Research Institute)
University of Ulster
Magee Campus
Aberfoyle House
Northland Road
Derry/Londonderry
BT48 7GA
Northern Ireland.

Email: incore@ulster.ac.uk

Website: www.ulster.ac.uk/incore

© INCORE, University of Ulster

All Rights Reserved

ISBN: 978-1-85923-250-7

Established in 1993, INCORE (International Conflict Research Institute) is an international centre of excellence that aims to influence how societies make the transition from violent conflict to sustainable peace through quality teaching, academic study and the dissemination of knowledge and resources. Building on the Northern Ireland experience, as well as international comparative research, INCORE works in an interdisciplinary way, adapting knowledge to local contexts. INCORE gathers, processes, and distributes information and knowledge through research, teaching and social innovation which is aimed at building the capacity of local and international researchers, policymakers and practitioners to tackle the complex challenges of moving from violence to peace. INCORE has had associate status with the United Nations University since it was established in 1993. This relationship provides for cooperation between the two in the promotion of research, postgraduate education and training, advisory services and dissemination of knowledge throughout the worldwide community of learning and research.

This research was funded by the Equality Directorate Research Branch of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (Northern Ireland).

Report Structure

Executive Summary	3
1. Introduction	11
2. Research Methodology	15
3. Literature Review	18
4. Successes to Date	36
5. Outstanding Issues	53
6. Five Year Priorities	98
7. Conclusions and Recommendations	107
Bibliography	114
Appendix: List of Respondents	127

Acknowledgements

The author gratefully acknowledges the support of the Equality Research Division of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMdFM) for supporting this qualitative research study. Thanks are also extended to all those who gave of their time to be interviewed and for speaking frankly and honestly about the opportunities and challenges for good relations and reconciliation in the coming years. Additional thanks to those who attended, and participated in, a policy roundtable event on the initial research findings in April 2011. Finally, thanks to Prof. Brandon Hamber for his support for the research and helpful feedback in earlier drafts, to Shonagh Higgenbotham and Janet Farren at INCORE for their work on both the roundtable event and final publication, and to Philip Burch in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ulster for preparing this report for publication. The final recommendations expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of OFMdFM.

Executive Summary

The recent history of conflict in Northern Ireland has left its mark on the whole society and few would argue that quick fix solutions can be found to address its multiple legacies. Significant political progress has been achieved. Violence and the threat of violence have greatly reduced and there are indications that people are increasingly willing to break down the long held barriers of mistrust and fear between, and within, communities. Yet much work remains to be done. Northern Ireland remains a deeply divided society, polarised along some of the most institutionalised and embedded of structures - housing, education, social and religious life, sporting and cultural activities - while the evidence points to the expressed desire of many that this were not the case.

The motivation for this qualitative research project is to make a practical contribution to the future planning of 'good relations' and 'reconciliation' policy, grantmaking and practice in the coming years through the identification of key themes and issues that require specific focus and attention. This research study takes place at a key juncture in the ongoing process of building peace in Northern Ireland with new policy priorities being developed by the Northern Ireland Executive and reviews being undertaken by some of the key internal and external funders of 'peace and reconciliation' work. The research was funded by the Equality Directorate Research Branch of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister and was subject to review by the University of Ulster's Research Ethics Committee and approved to proceed in May 2010. The field research was undertaken between June 2010 and December 2010.

Qualitative in focus, the empirical research sought the views of 31 key individuals from within the political, legislative and policy-making sectors, the civic and business sectors and the community and voluntary sector. Respondents were asked to consider, and formulate responses to a number of key research areas, including:

- What are the successes in terms of moving towards a 'shared and better future' to date?
- What are the outstanding issues which still require attention?
- What are the priorities over the next five years in achieving a 'shared and better future' and how can these priorities be achieved?

In addition to the qualitative fieldwork undertaken, desk-based research was conducted in the form of a review of recent academic and non-academic literature generated on issues of good relations, community relations, equality, community development and reconciliation. Broadly speaking, this literature contributes to the overall discourse around the broad themes of good relations and reconciliation, with specific foci on key thematic areas.

Key Findings: Successes to date

During the course of the interviews, research respondents were initially asked to reflect on what they view to be the successes (both broad macro successes as well as specific policies, initiatives, projects or approaches) to date in moving Northern Ireland society towards a 'shared and better future'. Undoubtedly, the most common responses related to the political changes which have taken

place at both regional and local levels and the increasing evidence of stability and bedding-in of the political institutions. The changes in the security context, including the transformation of policing structures and the reduction in the levels of violence and the threat of violence, were also noted as key achievements. A range of responses focused on what could broadly be framed as changes in the social and economic context of Northern Ireland, and the impact and influence of such changes on the development of good relations. These included the targeting of socio-economic disadvantage and differentials, greater collaborative working across and between sectors and agencies, and the significant economic support provided by external grantmakers over the past decades. Notable successes were also specified in relation to inter-communal trust and relationship building, with indications of positive changes in attitudes towards the 'other', often based on increasing levels of contact. References to the levels of cross-community mixing in the workplace were particularly significant. At a practice level, achievements were also noted in the variety and creativity of approaches to addressing negative attitudes and behaviours within and between communities.

Key Findings: Outstanding Challenges

The second research question required the respondents to focus on the specific issues, themes and areas which they identify as remaining challenges which hinder the development of 'a shared and better future' for Northern Ireland. A broad range of issues emerged, which are expanded on in greater depth in the full report. Key outstanding challenges identified included:

- the perceived lack of political vision and leadership around the issue of inter-communal division in Northern Ireland. A sense of frustration was expressed as to the significant work which remains to develop a clear and agreed vision of the sort of society that should be created, post-Agreement. Respondents called for a clear set of social and public policies, with achievable goals and targets which would contribute to the achievement of this vision.
- the individual capacity, competency and maturation of some locally elected representatives to work effectively within the newly formed political institutions.
- the level and efficacy of cross-departmental working practices to provide a 'joined-up' approach to address the inter-connected challenges of building better relationships between individuals and communities.
- the 'dissident threat' and the dangers posed by groups which oppose the current political arrangements.
- weak or absent community leadership within some loyalist communities which serves to hinder their self-confidence and development.
- the need to support and encourage socio-economic development as a fundamental priority for the future success of the region and a key element in the delivery of cohesion and integration between and within communities, particularly during periods of economic contraction.
- current levels of residential segregation and the limits this places on individuals' and communities' ability to interact with 'the other'. It was acknowledged that residential segregation is the product of a range of complex factors, including historical patterns, displacement during the conflict, and patterns of fear and mistrust. However, it was felt that with the adoption of a staged approach, combined with good housing stock, a conducive policy environment and strong community commitment and infrastructure, greater progress is possible.

- the continued existence and erection of physical barriers between communities and the tensions which manifest themselves at 'interface areas'. While recognising that the removal of physical barriers is far from straightforward, the majority view was that ongoing work to facilitate communities to come together and build relationships of trust, as part of a longer-term goal of barriers removal, was possible and preferable.
- the levels of financial support currently available to support work with young people in both formal and informal educational and developmental sectors, particularly focusing on the impact of inter-communal division. Four key threads emerged in this area. Firstly, the opportunities and challenges which face the formal education system in terms of levels and types of mixing between students from different religious and cultural backgrounds, and the impact of the predominately segregated education system. Secondly, the broad range of challenges facing young people as a consequence of the social and economic context in which they are growing up, the segregated nature of the society and the legacy of the conflict itself. Thirdly, the role of the non-formal youth sector and the provisions which are available, both through public sector and community-based avenues. Fourthly, the approaches and methodologies used in working with young people and outstanding issues emerging in relation to this.
- confusion around the 'practice' of community relations, disagreement over 'what works', weak coordination between multiple interventions, poor utilisation of resources and lack of organisational memory contributing to a lack of coherence and concurrence as to the value or effectiveness of interventions undertaken.
- the loss of hard-won knowledge and learning and the unnecessary duplication of activities and resources as a result. A significant number of respondents acknowledged that there may well be a wealth of good ideas, good practices and good outcomes in existence but that, for various reasons, this information is not being adequately documented and shared. Respondents spoke of the need for some form of taking-stock of what has been learned to date in order to ensure future investment of resources is strategically planned and based on solid evidence of impact.
- the need for clarity on the multiple roles and functions of the Community Relations Council, and the specific contribution the organisation makes towards the development of good relations and reconciliation in the future.
- concerns that the current financial commitments to support good relations and reconciliation practice may not be sufficient to tackle the remaining legacies of the conflict. Concerns were also expressed about the level of funding dependency that exists within the third sector, particularly given the anticipated reduction of external funding in the coming years.

Key Findings: Five-Year Priorities

While acknowledging that the work of developing a 'shared and better future' requires long-term intervention and generational commitment, the focus on the next five years was strategic and intentional. Respondents were asked to consider the following five-year priorities in achieving a 'shared and better future' and how these priorities can be effectively achieved. Thirteen key priorities emerged from the responses provided.

Clearly articulate vision and direction of travel

The most pressing priority articulated by respondents was the urgent need for an agreed vision, direction of travel and clear cross-party commitment to support the development of a 'shared and better future'. This vision statement would require explicit agreement from the political parties as to their understanding of the issues to be addressed. It would clearly set out the overarching aims, objectives and outcomes and articulate the commitment required of the Executive to provide the financial resources to ensure its delivery.

Develop strategic agreement and practical implementation of cross-departmental working

Attention should be paid to ensuring that decisions made in one government department or agency are *complementary* rather than *contrary* to another and to the vision and direction of travel. The development of a coherent strategic framework, with agreed objectives and targets should go a substantial way to increasing activity within individual departments. However, it is the coordination of work between government departments that requires active intervention.

Develop and strengthen coherent cross-sectoral collaborative structures

The strengthening of cross-sectoral and multi-agency working relationships through the development of effective structures, with decision-making authority, should be prioritised. This will ensure effective delivery of clearly articulated objectives at political, statutory and community levels. While respondents acknowledged that a variety of multi-agency and cross-sectoral structures do exist, they are often *ad hoc*, lacking in clear or specific terms of reference, are poorly attended or lack sufficient decision-making powers to ensure effectiveness. It was recommended that a thorough audit of existing networking mechanisms should take place, with the objective of rationalisation, restructuring and/or formalising of structures which currently exist and ensuring new provision for gaps in networking opportunities which would enhance the delivery of identified good relations objectives.

Consolidate roles and responsibilities of local government to deliver on good relations and reconciliation priorities

Generally, respondents spoke positively of the increasing recognition and responsibility taken by local government to support good relations in their boroughs. However, most indicated that further investment is required to ensure this work continues to be supported and developed, in both the immediate, and long-term. This includes a review and renewal of the District Council Community Relations Programme to make it appropriate and relevant for the current context. Respondents indicated that local government should be further supported and encouraged to take on additional roles and responsibilities, as well as continuing with their current work, where it is successfully making changes to the local context.

Create effective coordination structures between funding streams

Greater communication and collaboration is required between grantmaking sources, including those from central and local government, the European Union, the Irish government, lottery and charitable sources, international and private foundations, and the various other smaller pools of money that are distributed in Northern Ireland. In the current period of diminishing financial resources, it was recognised that greater coherence and cooperation is required to ensure that funding resources are being utilised as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Conduct broad based review of what works and why

The need to understand the impact of programmes and initiatives to date was identified by the majority of respondents as a key strategic priority, which requires immediate action. Despite a substantial investment of funding, resources and time in the development of programmes and projects, there is still a dearth of evidence and overarching analysis of what methodological approaches have most effectively contributed to the development of good relations in Northern Ireland. A broad scale review of what has worked, and a matching of communities' needs and appropriate programmes and interventions, was proposed.

Develop overarching strategy for work with children and young people

An overall strategic framework for work with children and young people, both within and outside of the formal education sector was identified as a key priority area requiring attention. This includes the development of strategically targeted resources that complement each other and are both multi-agency and multi-issue focused. Calls for a coordinated approach to youth intervention and investment in the development of youth leadership programmes and approaches were coupled with a proposal for a champion or strategic leader to develop work in this area. An overarching review of the contribution of the various service providers (schools, statutory youth and community-based youth sector) was proposed, as was the effective dissemination of the various methodologies and approaches developed to work towards good relations, equality and reconciliation objectives in order to ensure cross-sectoral learning and non-duplication of efforts.

Demonstrate active political support for integrated and shared education

Clearly articulated moral and practical support for the expansion of the integrated school sector was identified as a key priority for the coming years, as was support for the further development of collaborative working arrangements between schools located in proximity to one another. This desire for greater cross-community contact was underpinned by economic arguments, expressing what they felt were the significant savings which could be gained from increased sharing and amalgamation of schools, where practical. This would require a broad review of how teachers are trained and supported to work within an integrated setting and that the taught curriculum reflects the needs of all young people, regardless of background or identity. Respondents also noted the need to prioritise the mainstreaming of externally supported programmes into formal public policy making and implementation to ensure that positive changes to current structures are firmly embedded.

Prioritise economic and social regeneration and investment and enhance opportunities for sharing

In order to effect real change in the delivery of social services, particularly in areas of high deprivation and community division, substantial changes in public spending are required which prioritises the sharing of services and resources across communities. This requires changes, not only in policy and practice, but also in the current cultures within government departments, agencies and public bodies that currently accommodate rather than actively address current inter-communal divisions.

Prepare the community and voluntary sector for new economic and policy context

The significant reduction in financial resources available to the community and voluntary sector was identified as a specific issue requiring prioritisation and preparation work in the coming years.

A number of respondents have noted that the non-statutory sector appears particularly ill-prepared for the challenging economic times which have resulted from the financial downturn, coupled with the predicted reduction in external funding from a variety of sources. A key priority identified was the need for increased collaboration across the sector and a rationalisation of services, to ensure non-duplication and efficient utilisation of resources. This, it was noted, requires the active engagement of umbrella structures and the effective management of existing geographic and sectoral networks and partnership arrangements.

Explore and test new opportunities for residential mixing

The persistent issue of segregation in housing was identified by many as a key priority area requiring strategic planning over the next five years. While no definitive view was expressed about the level of intervention that should be adopted to change the current patterns of division, a significant number of respondents called for a high level review of programmes of work to date and a specific policy commitment to ensure that future public housing is allocated on the basis of equal access, allocation on the basis of need, with explicit commitments to safety and sharing as key objectives.

Prepare for key commemorative events

The number of anniversaries of key historical events which are coming up over the next decade as a good relations issue was identified as requiring attention and preparation. Respondents acknowledged both the opportunities as well as the challenges of marking and commemorating events which have significance for particular, and often distinct, communities. They spoke of the opportunities to acknowledge and re-visit events of the past within a contemporary context and the possibility that it will open new spaces for engagement and dialogue between communities. Respondents expressed concerns regarding the perceived lack of preparedness of the society to manage the practical, financial and emotional issues which these anniversary events will raise. Respondents called for a strategic and inclusive approach to be taken to plan for the celebration and commemoration of events of special significance and for a mature and non-confrontational approach to be taken by our political and community leaders.

Recommendations

The report concludes a set of eight recommendations, based not only on the research findings, but on an analysis of the more recently published literature, policy documents, media coverage and observations as to the challenge of working towards a more 'cohesive, shared and integrated' society. Each recommendation is intentionally broad and strategic in focus, highlighting the importance of building strong foundations over the next five years upon which more effective work will logically develop and progress. A range of actors is required to affect this change. Each recommendation should be viewed holistically and individual stakeholders should consider the contribution they can make to ensure their successful delivery.

- 1. Embrace the language of profound change.** Clear and unequivocal language is required to define both the process and the desired outcome. It is recommended that language of reconciliation used by the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement be adopted, as it clearly articulates the depth and breadth of change required.

- 2. Adopt a strategic framework for action and a significant commitment of resources.** With urgency, the Northern Ireland Executive should adopt a comprehensive and well-resourced framework for action to address the challenge of reconciliation for the society as a whole.
- 3. Create efficient and meaningful structures through which progress can be achieved.** At public policy and implementation level, the commitment of all government departments and agencies to work towards the vision and objectives articulated in an overarching policy framework is required. This includes the establishment of a robust Ministerial Panel with sufficient authority and clout to set ambitious targets for action, identify and allocate resources, and impose measures and sanctions to ensure delivery on agreed objectives within agreed timeframes. A review of the fundamental function and purpose of the Community Relations Council and the District Council Community Relations Programme should be undertaken swiftly and efficiently. These reviews should be predicated on an acceptance of the importance of a dedicated, strategically-focused regional body that can retain both challenge and innovation functions and act as a central hub for partnership building, knowledge exchange and critical dialogue and reflection. It is also recommended that a workable structure is created to include departments, agencies, programmes and independent trusts which provide financial resources to support good relations and reconciliation work at sectoral and community levels.
- 4. Develop greater understanding of what works and why.** In order to develop greater clarity as to 'what works' in relation to approaches and methodologies to support reconciliation processes, a comprehensive review of practice, which assesses the knowledge, skills and resources developed to date is recommended in order to inform effective and efficient practices into the future. In the first instance, it is recommended that a broad-based working group representing government departments, relevant agencies, the Community Relations Council, funding bodies, researchers and evaluators, and community practitioners be convened to define the parameters of such work, isolate a methodological approach, identify the resources required and define a timescale for delivery. This should culminate in the development of an effective and adaptable mechanism for dissemination of learning and methodologies which can support the recurrent need for revision and refreshment of ideas and approaches, as the context continues to develop and change.
- 5. Integrate and mainstream options which support integration.** The major faultlines of inter-communal division in Northern Ireland society have been clearly identified. Over the next five years, it is recommended that, with the explicit support and commitment of the Northern Ireland Executive, all responsible government departments and public agencies identify the legislative and policy levers required to affect real change to the current and persistent patterns of segregation. It is recommended that the Northern Ireland Executive takes the ambitious and courageous decision to make fundamental public policy decisions that place integration at the heart of government objectives.
- 6. Articulate link between good relations, reconciliation and dealing with the past.** For too long 'dealing with the past' has been treated as a separate, often mechanistic, process involving specific structures, actions, objectives and constituencies, disengaged from the wider good relations and reconciliation objectives in Northern Ireland. What is required is a

clear articulation of the connections, commonalities and intersections between dealing with the past and broader reconciliation processes at individual, community, political and societal levels. This should replace the current siloing of dealing with the past and relationship-building processes into separate grant programmes, policy documents and community projects. In continuing the development of a framework and action plan for good relations policy and practice work, the report of the Consultative Group on the Past should be revisited and cross-referenced to ensure coherence and consistency of approach and objectives.

- 7. Seize the opportunity presented by upcoming commemorations to make space for engagement, dialogue and learning between communities.** The forthcoming decade will be marked by a series of political and social anniversaries which have particular resonance and significance for individuals and communities in Northern Ireland. In relation to commemoration in the public realm, it is recommended that new lines of communication, dialogue and partnership are developed between key stakeholders. These connections should serve to explore the challenges and opportunities arising from the forthcoming period of commemoration and remembrance. It is recommended that this key period is viewed as an opportunity to create new ways of working, foster greater and deeper understanding within and between communities, to develop new opportunities for dialogue, and to acknowledge diversity, difference and interdependence. In practical terms, it is recommended that all stakeholders begin with a process of education and understanding as to how individuals, groups and communities wish to commemorate the events of the past and agree ways in which this can be achieved, taking into account existing legislation, public order restrictions and norms related to events in public space. At grantmaker level, it is recommended that potential funding of commemorative events is assessed so as to take into account an agreed set of principles which will serve to support, rather than hinder reconciliation processes. At a civic and community level, it is recommended that cultural identity be presented as a fluid and progressive process.
- 8. More effective utilisation of existing information, statistics and research data.** Research and data collection on the causes, consequences and long-term impacts of the conflict has been relatively well resourced in Northern Ireland. Effective utilisation of relevant research data requires a two-way process of engagement between researcher and end user. It is recommended that further exploration of the processes through which research and information collected on themes of significance to reconciliation processes is disseminated and made use of. In doing so, blockages that exist between the collection of quality data and its potential utility to relevant audiences can be identified and addressed and new ways forged which satisfy the needs and expectations of both the research and policy and practice communities.

1. Introduction

The recent history of conflict in Northern Ireland has left its mark on the whole society and few would argue that quick fix solutions can be found to address its multiple legacies. Significant political progress has been achieved. Violence and the threat of violence have greatly reduced and there are positive indications that people are increasingly willing to break down the long held barriers of mistrust and fear between, and within, communities. Yet much work remains to be done. Northern Ireland is a deeply divided society, polarised along some of the most institutionalised and embedded of structures - housing, education, social and religious life, sporting and cultural activities - while the evidence points to the expressed desire of many that this were not the case. Social segregation remains a financial drain on ever diminishing resources. However, efforts to address inter-communal divisions appear painfully slow at times. Significant financial resources have been invested in the promotion of 'peace', 'reconciliation', 'equality' and 'good relations' and yet the society continues to wrestle with what these terms mean, and how they should be most effectively supported and achieved.

At political level, the establishment of a functioning Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive has marked a sea-change in the relationships between political leaders, and has been lauded as a model of conflict resolution internationally. This process of coming to a formal political agreement has brought increased stability to the region and demonstrates a practical commitment to a shared political future, albeit, at times, fragile and tentative. At community level, despite the considerable successes associated with the peace process, the development of a 'shared and better future' can still be said to be incomplete, and long-term intervention is still required to support communities, organisations and institutions through the transition. At an individual level, the process of challenging prejudices, coming to terms with the past and imagining an interdependent future remains a highly personal and often private process, which nonetheless requires support and encouragement.

This research takes place at a key juncture in the ongoing process of building peace in Northern Ireland. At a policy level, the *A Shared Future: Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland* document, introduced in 2005 during a period of direct rule, will be replaced by a new strategy for a 'shared and better future', led by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), and collectively implemented by the devolved government. A commitment to this new policy approach has been given and a draft document entitled *Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration* was released for consultation in the summer of 2010. It has been widely acknowledged that differences between the political parties had led to delays in the publication of this draft policy framework and the reaction to the consultation document was certainly mixed. It was intended that a new document would be published following the May 2011 Assembly elections. At time of publication, a new document, which takes into account the public consultation process, had not been issued by the Assembly, although an all-party working group has been established to advise on revising the strategy. The timing of this research also coincided with the planned mid-term review of the EU-funded PEACE programme of 2007-2013, the most substantive external intervention in support of 'peace and reconciliation' in Northern Ireland, now in its third iteration. Other grant programmes are also under review or currently planning for spend-down of their financial commitments within Northern Ireland.

Aims and objectives of the research

Rather than a purely academic exercise in data collection and analysis, the motivation for this qualitative research project is to make a practical contribution to the future planning of 'good relations' and 'reconciliation' policy and practice in the coming years. It also aims to inform future grantmaking priorities by identifying issues, areas and themes which require additional focus and attention.

The research sought to qualitatively explore the views of a range of key actors in Northern Ireland as to their vision of what a 'shared and better future' might entail and, fundamentally, how this can be more effectively achieved through policy and practice interventions. Political, civic and community leaders were approached to explore, in a qualitative manner, five core research questions, namely:

- What are the successes in terms of moving towards a 'shared and better future'?
- What are the outstanding issues which still require attention?
- What are the current economic impacts of segregation and how could these be mitigated into the future?
- What are the priorities over the next five years in achieving a 'shared and better future'?
- How can these priorities be achieved – particularly taking advantage of the current funding opportunities available?

A key objective on the research is to make the findings available to those with responsibility for prioritising policymaking, programming and funding on good relations and reconciliation themes. As part of this process of dissemination, INCORE hosted a policy roundtable in April 2011 to present the key findings of the research. This well-attended event also sought feedback and reflection from a range of community, statutory and political representatives as to how the research findings resonated within their context and experience. The rich discussion which took place at this event has shaped the analysis of the research undertaken, although the core findings from the field work conducted in the second half of 2010 remain unchanged.

Language and Terminology

Words and phrases used in Northern Ireland can be loaded with intended or unintended meanings. Their usage can be perceived as an indicator of political or religious affiliation or ideological position. It can result in invisible barriers to communication forming, as conversations become entangled with varying interpretations of positions and meanings. While the use of particular terminology has not been the core focus on this research project, it is important to remain mindful of the ways in which certain phrases are interpreted and understood in the region, and the subsequent impact on data collection, analysis and presentation. As noted in earlier work:

The language of 'peace' has not escaped the minefield of contested terminology – in which the connotations of certain words and phrases within different communities, and their popularity and appropriateness, wax and wane over time. (Hamber & Kelly, 2005: 24)

This research does not propose definitive answers to the ongoing debate on appropriate terminology or conceptual understanding associated with the work of moving a society from conflict to sustainable peace. It is, however, conscious that certain terms and phrases used can impact on responses

to questions posed. The research sought to hone in on fundamental yet practical questions that underpin the work of addressing the causes and legacies of the conflict. In doing so, it hoped to draw on the knowledge and experience of a range of key actors, while acknowledging that not all may have the same understanding of terms used or may prefer certain words and phrases over others.

After much internal discussion and review, the research was framed around the two key phrases of ‘good relations’ and ‘reconciliation’. This was in recognition of the dominant use of both phrases in the fields of policy, practice and grantmaking in Northern Ireland. Previously, the author of this report, in collaboration with Brandon Hamber, undertook qualitative research which sought the views of a range of key actors from three case study areas in Northern Ireland on the concept of reconciliation, in a society emerging from conflict (Hamber & Kelly, 2005). The research noted that the language of ‘reconciliation’ has endured in Northern Ireland, although in recent years it appears more commonly in the field of grantmaking than policy development. While referenced in both *The Agreement* of 1998 and the 2005 policy document, *A Shared Future: Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland*, it does not appear in the *Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Consultation Document* of 2010. A number of responses to the 2010 consultation document called for its reinsertion and explicit articulation, as noted in the *Consultation Analysis* report (Wallace Consulting, 2011).

The legislative duty for the promotion of ‘good relations’ under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, 1998 adds additional complexity to the language used. Over the past decade, this phrase has been increasingly adopted at both local government and community levels, and is more widely understood to go beyond the limited legal responsibilities of the Act. The term ‘community relations’ is also widely understood and utilised in reference to policy and practice and has endured since the early 1970s and the establishment of the Community Relations Commission. It has, more traditionally, implied a focus on relationships between Protestants and Catholics specifically. With the increasing recognition of the societal diversity of Northern Ireland, there now appears to be some confusion as to the distinction between these two most commonly used terms. ‘Good relations’ appears to encompass a broader understanding of relationships between multiple communities and identities, rather than the more typical bi-communal division associated with ‘community relations’.

Being mindful of the contestation in language and terminology, the research sought to work with, and allow for, the possibility of the interviewee defining the terminology used for their own purposes. This research seeks to reflect on the *detail* of how a society moved from conflict to sustainable peace and the steps that are required to be taken in the many aspects of the society requiring attention.

Structure of the report

Subsequent chapters follow the overall sequencing of the primary research undertaken during the second half of 2010. Chapter two outlines the methodology used for the research and the approach taken to the presentation of the data collected. Then, a brief review of the more recently-published academic, policy and practice literature which focuses on good relations and reconciliation themes in Northern Ireland, and which has informed the development and analysis of the research undertaken, is presented. Chapter four, five and six focus on the key research findings, structured on a thematic

basis. The report concludes with a set of strategic recommendations for the future, focusing specifically on the next five years of policy and practice planning and implementation.

2. Research Methodology

The methodological approach adopted for this research was qualitative in nature, focusing on semi-structured interviews with key individuals who have an interest in, or influence on, the development of good relations' priorities in the coming years. Qualitative methodology is an appropriate approach to such complex subject matter, which extends over a broad range of issues and approaches. By engaging with an interviewee in a more in-depth and extended discussion, framed by a set of key questions, a more nuanced and reflective response can be extracted by the researcher. The limitation of a qualitative approach of this nature is in the restricted number of interviewees who can act as informants, which is borne in mind during the data analysis phase. In accordance with University of Ulster research protocols, and in the interest of ensuring good research practice, all field research involving human subjects is required to undergo appropriate scrutiny and ethical approval prior to proceeding. The proposed research was subject to review by the University's Research Ethics Committee and approval to proceed was granted in May 2010.

Literature Review

In addition to the qualitative fieldwork undertaken, desk-based research was conducted. This literature review encompasses recent government policy on relevant themes, academic and non-academic publications and reports from both statutory and non-statutory organisations with responsibility for relevant themes, including good relations, community relations, equality, community development and reconciliation. A substantial body of local literature is available, often supported by grantmakers and government departments with a specific interest in researching or documenting work in this area. Broadly speaking, this literature contributes to the overall discourse around the themes of good relations and reconciliation, with specific foci on key thematic areas.

Previous research undertaken has included reviews of relevant literature from the 1970's onwards (see Knox and Hughes, 1996; Gallagher, 1995; Social Information Systems, 1994; Knox & Quirk, 2000; Hughes *et al*, 2003; Hamber & Kelly, 2005; Conway & Byrne, 2005; Kelly, 2006). Therefore, to inform this research, the review focuses on post-2004 literature and documentation. It aims to provide an overview, rather than a detailed analysis of developments in theoretical framing, policy development and practice documentation in recent years.

Identification of research subjects

The research outline, supported by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister's Equality Directorate Research Branch proposed to conduct 21-30 qualitative interviews with a range of identified actors. In total, 31 interviews were undertaken during the course of the fieldwork phase, which was completed between June and December 2010. Interviewees were chosen to reflect a representative range of interests, targeting three main sectors:

- the political, legislative and policy-making sector (including elected representatives, special advisors, government agency staff and officials);

- the civic and business leadership sector (including churches, leadership of non-departmental public bodies, commissions and independent non-governmental organisations, business interests, academics);
- the community leadership sector.

The in-depth nature of the interviews required some difficult decisions to be made as to who might usefully inform the research. The objective was to gain as much insight into the various perspectives and opinions that exist on the subject under investigation. In the first instance, a 'long' list of potential interviewees was drawn up, based on the researcher's own knowledge and experience of the environment and the various sectoral interests in the region. This was supplemented by additional discussions with colleagues within INCORE and through an initial discussion with the Community Relations Council to identify possible interviewees with a range of experiences and views on good relations policy and practice work. This long list of potential interviewees was also circulated to the relevant personnel within the Equality Directorate Research Branch, with a request for further suggestions, followed up subsequently by a meeting with OFMdFM staff to update on interview progress to date. Letters of invitation were sent to potential interviewees, explaining the aims and objectives of the project and detailing the key research questions which would form the basis of the interviews. While extensive efforts were made to ensure that a broad representation of positions were included, this was not always possible, due to a lack of response from potential interviewees, or time and resource limitations. The researcher is aware that the views of a range of other sectors and opinions could usefully have been included, and the reader should bear this in mind when reading across the research findings presented.

Data Analysis

As noted previously, the interviews undertaken were semi-structured in focus. A decision was taken early in the research design to include verbatim extracts from the interviews undertaken. According to Corden & Sainsbury, this technique of using quotations serves a number of purposes and processes including presenting research data variously as 'evidence', 'explanation', 'illustration' and in order to 'deepen understanding' (2006: 11-13). Selected quotes were used only when the researcher was confident that the views of the individual had been recorded accurately. Interview notes were transcribed directly following the interview and were manually coded by response to questions posed and themes emerging. In order to present the research findings in a coherent and accessible manner, the responses to each of the five core research questions were analysed separately and categorised by themes emerging. This thematic framework was developed in order for clear patterns of frequency of issues raised, and depth and focus of responses, to be identified. In the final presentation of data, the responses were conflated into three key sections of research results, given the overlap in themes emerging.

Presentation of Research Data

All those who agreed to participate in the research were asked to respond to the questions asked during the interview as honestly and comprehensively as possible. They were advised that their views and comments would inform the overall research analysis and selected quotes may be included

in the research findings, but would not be attributed by name. As it is important for the reader to understand the general source of opinions expressed, the sectoral area of the interviewee has been included when directly quoting from an individual respondent. No names of individuals have been used in the body of the text and, at times, the gender of the informant has been changed. Therefore, no inference should be made by the reader as to the identity of the respondent through use of gender identifiers.

External Context influencing Research Findings

Prior to the July 2010 launch of the consultation document *Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration* (CSI) much attention at both political and community levels had centred on its possible focus, content and plan for implementation. Given that the fieldwork for this research began in June 2010, and the subject matter was 'good relations' and 'reconciliation', the absence of the anticipated strategy was noted by a number of respondents during the earlier interviews conducted. With the launch of the new consultation document in late July 2010, a significant number of interviewees took the opportunity to express their views on the document and its content. Although the research questions did not specifically address the content of the CSI document and the focus of the research went beyond the development of government policy on the issue, it is unsurprising that interviewees referred to it in response to the research questions posed, given its direct relevance. It was made clear to interviewees from the outset that the research was distinct from the consultation exercise on the CSI document which was running in parallel and that other opportunities existed to express their views on the content of the document itself.

3. Literature Review

Prior to undertaking qualitative fieldwork, an extensive review of contemporary (post-2004) literature was undertaken by the author. The purpose of the review was threefold: to contribute to the establishment of a framework for the research; to review the current discourses, definitions and terminology used on the subject matter at hand; and to identify areas where research has previously been undertaken and, conversely, where research gaps exist. This literature review focuses on government policy on relevant issues, academic publications and reports from both statutory and non-statutory organisations with responsibility for relevant themes, including good relations, community relations, equality, community development and reconciliation.

Following an extensive review, the collection was categorised by relevant theme and literature type, as this reflected the approach adopted for the analysis of data collected. While literature has been grouped by general heading, it is acknowledged that overlap between categories does occur and some of the literature addressed a number of common themes. This review was not intended to be wholly comprehensive or definitive, given the timeframe of the research and the volume of literature which has been produced in recent years. As noted earlier, previous reviews of relevant literature from the 1970's onwards have been undertaken (including, Social Information Systems, 1994; Gallagher, 1995; Knox and Hughes, 1996; Knox & Quirk, 2000; Hamber & Kelly, 2005; Conway & Byrne, 2005; Kelly, 2006) and thus a focus on post-2004 literature and documentation was taken, with a few exceptions made for significant literature pertinent to this study. This review aims to observe some of the key thematic foci of both academic and non-academic research in recent years and should assist the reader in identifying some areas which may require future work to inform both policy and practice in the future. Full references for all cited literature are included in the bibliography.

Of particular interest, post-2004 is the development of new 'good relations' policy documents by both the Northern Ireland Office and the Northern Ireland Executive, post-2007. Most notable are the *A Shared Future: Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland* (OFMDFM, 2005) and accompanying *Triennial Action Plan 2006-2009* (OFMDFM, 2006), and the subsequent *Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Consultation Document* (OFMDFM, 2010), currently awaiting another iteration. These policy frameworks aimed to provide strategic approaches to the development of good relations, albeit the former having been more comprehensively detailed than the latter at present. Of particular note, with the restoration of devolution in 2007, were the references to good relations and the building of a 'shared and better, and more sustainable future for all our people' in the Programme for Government 2008-2011 (OFMDFM, 2008). The challenges and opportunities arising from the increasing diverse society, alongside its long-standing minority communities, were addressed in the *Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2010* (OFMDFM, 2005). These new good relations and equality policy frameworks required the development of indicators and monitoring tools. These were advanced by a broadly representative Working Group, culminating in the publication of the *Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report* (OFMDFM, 2007). The report identified eleven priority outcomes to be measured over time, subsequently updated and reported upon in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Of interest, from a research perspective, was the publication of an *International Review of Public Policies towards Improving Inter-Community Relations* conducted

by Clem McCartney for INCORE in 2003, which provides an overview of policy initiatives adopted by a broad range of multi-cultural societies, including South Africa, Lebanon, Britain, India and Canada. Interestingly, the report notes that few examples exist of public policy taking an active role in managing inter-community relations (McCartney, 2003: 4) and there are only isolated examples of practice. That being said, it does note that Northern Ireland has a great deal to share in terms of the range of activities which have been supported through public policy. The author adds a note of caution regarding public policy: rather than it being accepted as a positive or benign force, it should be accepted as having the potential to exacerbate inter-community tensions, particularly in identity-based conflicts, where policies result in an intensification of differences for political advantage. The report also notes that differing approaches to inter-communal relations taken by individual governments are influenced by their preferred form - categorised as homogenisation, separate development, co-existence and pluralism. While acknowledging the importance of public policy to address inter-communal divisions, the research concludes with a caveat – that structural changes alone may not be enough to ensure improved community relations, and government policy is limited in the degree to which it can implement individual attitudinal change.

The proceedings of the Community Relations Council's Policy Development Conference on a shared future in June 2005 also provides some helpful insights from a range of speakers from the statutory, community, academic and policy sectors on the transferability of policy frameworks into practical actions to affect real change (CRC, 2005). Interestingly, a key speaker at the event, Mike Morrissey, also noted that the responsibility for good relations does not rest solely at public policy level. He noted:

[I]t is unreasonable to expect that the state can resolve everything without a complementary, active role for citizens – creating a shared future is everyone's responsibility, while at the same time it is important that the state is held to account for its appropriate responsibilities (2005: 13).

The Chair of the event, Robin Wilson, concluded the conference by exploring the development of policy on good relations through the lens of the six stages of effective policymaking, starting with the identification of the problem to be addressed, and concluding with a determination on how progress is assessed and monitored. While the *A Shared Future* policy document will be replaced by a new framework developed by the devolved Assembly, this mechanism through which to identify the stages in a policy cycle to ensure coherence and effectiveness may be worthy of consideration.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) has oversight responsibility for the implementation and effectiveness of the statutory duty on public authorities to promote equality and good relations. It published a number of relevant documents, including *Promoting Good Relations – A Guide for Public Authorities* (ECNI, 2007) and a subsequent summary guide (ECNI, 2008), which sought to provide public authorities with information and advice on the implementation of good relations duty under Section 75 (2) of the Northern Ireland Act, 1998. Prior to their publication, the ECNI had commissioned 'Good Relations Associates' to prepare a challenge paper on embedding good relations in local government through the Review of Public Administration (RPA) process which was being prepared for at that time (ECNI, 2007). While the RPA process has not yet resulted in a reconfiguration of local council areas and responsibilities, many of the 14 recommendations

made in the document are still relevant and are worthy of further consideration as changes are implemented. These include the further embedding of good relations priorities within community planning processes at local level; the proposed implementation of the Belfast City Council model of good relations which situates the responsibilities of the council within the Chief Executive's Office with a dedicated staff team and budget; serious consideration to be given to the strengthening of the existing good relations statutory duties on local councils; the development of a robust community engagement strategy to facilitate the community/voluntary sector role within community planning partnerships; additional training for new and existing councillors and staff in good relations as an overarching theme of a capacity building programme; and a need to legislate on the use of flags and emblems at local level, coupled with development work to ensure community engagement and respect. Other recommendations, including the conducting of baseline research 'to establish the current state of relations, identify existing and developing concerns and provide a benchmark for measuring progress in the promotion of good relations' (2007: 7) have been somewhat addressed through the PEACE III cluster development of local Peace and Reconciliation Action Plans (see SEUPB, 2007) but may require further attention as local areas move beyond a reliance on the EU funding programme.

From 2004 onwards, a significant body of literature has developed on new economic migrants, minority ethnic relations and equality issues, broadly defined. A number of reports have been published by the Institute of Conflict Research (ICR) on migrant workers in Northern Ireland (Bell *et al*, 2004; Jarman & Monaghan, 2004; Jarman, 2005b; Jarman & Byrne, 2007). Jarman's (2005c) useful working paper on future planning for migration into Northern Ireland and a subsequent co-authored report with Martynowicz (2009), published by the ECNI, provide new insights into equality and integration issues in respect of new migrants, exploring a range of themes including employment, housing, education, health, racism and discrimination, cohesion, integration and equality. The report provides eleven practical recommendations, including a number on future economic and investment planning, community planning, monitoring of fair employment legislation and language policies. Most significantly in terms of good relations policies, the report recommends that consideration be given as to how to develop a 'reciprocal', rather than 'assimilationist' process of integration, which would involve the creation of spaces and opportunities for new migrants to have an active input into the new society which they have joined. The report also calls for the urgent development of a new 'Cohesion, Sharing and Integration' policy document and for greater consideration to be given for effective integration of all communities within this new framework, as well as within the Racial Equality strategy. The final recommendation of the document calls for acknowledgement and consideration of the increasing diversity of Northern Ireland within the ongoing development of a Bill of Rights for the region to ensure that the human rights of members of the new migrant populations are included within its remit.

At a statutory level, the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) published two reports in collaboration with ICR on *The Experiences of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland* and the *Attitudes to Migrant Workers* from the results of a 2009 Omnibus Survey. These reports provide us with new insights into the profile of migrant workers in Northern Ireland in terms of age, nationality, employment status, educational qualifications and duration of time in the region. It also highlights some of the challenges facing new arrivals in relation to access to services, housing and benefits, as well as their relationships with the wider community. Analyses of other locally-focused quantitative survey,

the Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) Survey, were published in research updates by Gilligan & Lloyd (2006) on levels of racial prejudice in Northern Ireland and on attitudes towards migration and migrant workers (Gilligan, 2008). The former update notes that the 2005 survey data clearly indicates a widespread sense among respondents that there is more racism in Northern Ireland compared with five years previously, with evidence that more people admit to having racial prejudices in 2005 than in 1994. This may reflect the changes in demographics in the intervening period. The latter NILT analysis report concludes by noting that the data from the 2006 survey indicates 'ambivalence' towards migrant workers, with more than two-thirds indicating that the greater diversity which migrant workers bring to Northern Ireland opens people up positively to new ideas and cultures. However, it notes that a slight majority of respondents do have concerns about the allocation of housing and the strain which new migrants are placing on the health service. It notes that 'the potential areas of conflict are around the allocation of state resources' (Gilligan, 2008: 4) in particular.

The results of the Young Life and Times (YLT) Survey, which sought 16-year olds attitudes to, and experiences of, contact with people from different minority ethnic and minority communities provides a unique insight into the new generations' views on the increasingly diverse context of Northern Ireland (NCB NI & ARK YLT, 2010). The report concludes with a reflection on the implications of the research findings for policy and practice. Three key areas are addressed. Firstly, the authors note the complexity of the concept of 'ethnic identity' in Northern Ireland and its equation with 'religious identity' in the interpretation of some. They recommend that within the classroom setting, students are afforded the opportunity and space to explore difference with their peer group, to understand other cultures and to respect and celebrate diversity, including through structured learning embedded in the curriculum. The report also recommends that schools take advantage of the opportunities which exist to explore issues of diversity, citizenship and integration from the European Union, as well as local programmes of support for schools. Secondly, the report notes the importance of young people receiving 'clear, accurate messages' (2010: 76) about the level, extent and impact of migration, noting that the often negative messages which are reported in the media should be countered with fair and accurate information which emphasises the positive impact of migration for the economy and society at a whole. Finally, it recommends that political and community leaders lead by example in the promotion of an 'equal, tolerant and anti-racist society' (2010: 77). On an individual basis, this requires leaders to be mindful of the use of 'inclusive and non-discriminatory language, to challenge racist assumptions and to correct misinformation when opportunities arise' (2010: 77). At a policy level, this requires OFMdFM to address issues of racism and prejudice towards minority groups in cross-departmental strategies, to address racial equality and good relations, and for individual departments, such as the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) to take steps to address prejudice and racism towards migrant children in sports and leisure activities, for example.

On the theme of racism and hate crimes, Jarman & Monaghan (2004) published an in-depth report on *Racial Harassment in Northern Ireland*. The report provides an overview and definition of 'racist incidents' in respect of legislative provision, outlining the range and extent of 'minority communities' in Northern Ireland and the increasingly sophisticated mechanisms for monitoring racially motivated incidents by the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI) and other agencies. It goes on to review and provide a detailed analysis of the racist incident data collected by the PSNI between 1996 and 2001, breaking it down by gender and age of victim, location, nature and time of incident and profile of perpetrator. Following an analysis of the responses to racist incidents by the police,

statutory services, and voluntary and community support, the report concludes with a detailed set of recommendations for future action to both improve responses to racist incidents and crimes and to eradicate the existence of racist attitudes and racial harassment within the society more generally. Thirty-three specific recommendations for future action are provided, framed around four key areas, namely: inter-agency responses to racism; improving police responses; activities for other agencies and the development of wider strategies for action. Many of the recommendations may still be valid. However, a detailed review of each would be required to match proposals for change with existing practice in the recording and tracking of racist incidents by both police and other statutory agencies, the degree and extent of multi-agency working and the scope for learning from other countries as to their strategies for addressing both racist attitudes and racist incidents within their own contexts. The House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee (2006) report on the challenge of hate crime in Northern Ireland also provides useful insights and evidence and highlights the responsibilities of a diverse range of both statutory and community bodies to address harassment and hate crime at all levels of society. Research undertaken also focused on the delivery of services to minority ethnic groups (Watt & McGaughey, 2006) in three jurisdictions, including Northern Ireland, and on those new migrants that deliver healthcare services (Hamilton & Camplisson, 2007). Both studies were detailed in scope and were intended to provide new insights which would ensure that our public service providers are aware of, and give due regard to, ethnic diversity in the planning and implementation of services to the general population.

A growing body of literature has developed around the issue of interfaces in Northern Ireland and the challenges they pose to the breaking down of inter-communal divisions within society. Conway & Byrne's *Interface Issues: An Annotated Bibliography* (2005) provides a comprehensive overview of existing publications, including research, conference reports and resources dating from early work in the mid-1970s to 2005. In 2007, the Belfast Interface Project (BIP) commissioned the Institute for Conflict Research (ICR) to provide an update, which included 20 new and additional pieces of work identified. These reports are easily accessible and thus a review of included literature is not repeated here. Other notable publications from ICR on interfaces include Byrne's report on *Interface Violence in East Belfast during 2002*, published in 2005 and Jarman's 2006 report on *Working at the Interface: Good Practice in Reducing Tension and Violence* (Jarman, 2006a). Jarman also contributed two insightful articles on interfaces to the CRC's *Shared Space* research journal, on the development of new interface areas, and security and segregation in Belfast (2005a and 2008 respectively). This CRC initiated *Shared Space* research journal has proven to be a significant resource and vehicle through which to disseminate research on good relations themes since its first issue in August 2005.

Paul Donnelly's article on 'Interfaces' in the CRC's *Sharing Over Separation* publication of 2006 draws on primary research undertaken at interface areas to provide ten recommendations for both policy and practice as it relates to this persistent challenge to building relations between physically separated communities. In summary, the article calls for an examination of the meaning of the term 'interface' and a detailed mapping of existing and potential interfaces to include the role of statutory bodies and service providers in those areas. Interestingly, the author also recommends an exploration of the potential for the private housing and business sectors to assist in the identification of problems and solutions for the delivery of services at interface areas. The report also calls for the development of a long-term, stakeholder-developed vision for interface areas, with short, medium and long-term interventions, based on a model of partnership working. It is also recommended that ongoing support

and training, with clear progression routes, is provided to 'interface workers' and that initiatives specifically targeted at young people are developed. Finally, the report calls for continued support for networking events to progress the development of a policy framework to address interface issues and the development of good practice models to support the implementation of policy goals.

Madeline Leonard's academic journal article, published in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* in 2008 draws on qualitative research conducted with eighty 14-15 year-old teenagers in North Belfast and examines how these young people recount narratives that 'maintain, reinforce and at times challenge sectarian boundaries in interface areas' (2008: 471). The research concludes that the attitudes of young people are not pre-determined and static, but change, and are influenced not only by external factors, but through their own development, reflection and experiences. Recently, the Belfast Interface Project published a Goldie & Ruddy (2010) authored report entitled *Crossing the Line* which aimed to 'document effective practice and engage with key stakeholders in the development of shared space in neighbourhoods close to an interface' (2010: 15). Based on desk-based and primary research, this report provides a useful discussion on the terminology of 'interface', 'contested space' and 'shared space', noting the concept of 'shared space' as a continuum which changes and develops over time. It goes on to note five main benefits of shared space, namely: freedom of movement, promoting equality, regeneration, economic benefits and conflict transformation. It also outlines eight key factors which assist in the promotion of shared spaces, including the creation of visible improvements, economic development, dialogue and political leadership. The report concludes by identifying three interdependent and overlapping approaches to the promotion of shared space, namely: the adoption of a community-based conflict transformation approach; strategic multi-agency working and inclusive and participatory decision-making processes with local communities; and the development and use of a sound evidence-base for future policy and practice decisions (2010: 66).

The terminology of 'shared spaces' is relatively new in Northern Ireland, and has been popularised in recent years by its inclusion as a key thematic area in the EU PEACE III Programme. A raft of new literature (including Goldie & Ruddy, 2010 above) has emerged which aims to grapple with what 'shared space' means and how it can contribute to the development of good relations in Northern Ireland. Much of this literature has focused on the experience of the urban context of Belfast. David Russell's 2005 article in the first issue of *Shared Space* entitled *Belfast: Strategies for a Shared City* provides an overview of the level of division in the city and the complexity of breaking down the physical and psychological barriers that prevent further sharing. Research reports prepared by Gaffikin *et al* (2008a and 2008b) on future planning for a shared space, supported by the CRC and Belfast City Council respectively, provide more in-depth analysis of the challenge of sharing in a range of contexts, including housing, public services and education. Gaffikin & Morrissey (2006, 2011) have also authored a number of academic articles on the concept of contested space, division and deprivation, which have contributed greatly to the development of thinking in this area. Leading much of the work on the development of concepts of shared space in the city, Belfast City Council's Good Relations Panel also commissioned an extensive report on the potential for sharing in a range of social and public settings. This report was produced by Deloitte in 2008 and concludes with a series of recommendations for improvements in public service provision in Belfast. The overarching research finding of the study noted that service usage is 'highly dependent upon perceptions of the community "ownership" of the location in which the facility is located' (2008: 111). As a result, the recommendations focus on a range of areas where changes and improvements in current positions and

practices could impact positively on current service usage. These include: government commitment to good relations principles; the embedding of good relations principles in existing public services and the planning of new services at both strategic and operational levels; the encouragement of effective partnership working; and the development of effective and systematic modes of data collection which would feed into a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy with regard to service access. This process, they argue, would provide a loop back to ensure continued improvements in service delivery over time. The Council's Good Relations Panel also commissioned a study to explore the issues of connectivity and mobility in Belfast, in the context of reducing sectarian tensions and the possibilities of expanding the shared spaces in the city (Jones & Boujenko, 2011). On the basis of this context, and the desire to develop more 'shared space' in the city, the report proposed 24 specific recommendations, including: the promotion of public transport as 'mobile shared space'; the investigation of potential public transport demand and consideration of other bus routes; further study into the relationship between bus services, patterns of segregation and potential demand; the organisation of a programme of activities, community events or neighbourhood festivals that will attract people from across all the communities; the development of strategic implementation plans for cycling and walking provision; and the creation of a common database for information and statistics on travel patterns, the use of shared spaces and perceptions of urban spaces. More broadly, academics Murtagh & Shirlow (2006) provide a detailed overview of the Belfast experience of segregation in their book *Belfast: Segregation, Violence and the City*, based on both empirical research and a review of a broad range of international literature on the continuing challenges of societies and urban centres following peace agreements.

Not all literature has focused on the Belfast experience. Following on from the CRC's '*Sharing over Separation*' conference in April 2006 and the subsequent publication of its proceedings, the Rural Community Network (RCN) worked with the CRC to co-commission a series of papers based on a strategic review of a rural perspective of community relations issues. A synopsis of each was published by RCN in *Sharing over Separation – a rural perspective* in 2010. The papers focus on themes of community development, flags and emblems, housing, interfaces, race and ethnicity, children and young people and rural institutions. The report concludes with a series of practical recommendations to support the development of good relations within a rural context, based on the seven thematic areas under consideration during the course of the research. The report does note that the themes are inter-related and therefore each recommendation should be 'considered holistically' (2010: 16). The first theme explores the relationship between community relations and community development with six specific recommendations presented including the need: for a small grants programme for capacity-building projects and training in order to develop community development and good relations projects in rural areas; to provide conditional support for single-identity work with some form of progression model; for the creation of greater linkages between rural institutions and the community development/good relations support structures; to inform and develop relevant government departments of the link between community development and good relations; and for the development of greater reflective practice sessions to share and challenge learning and ensure greater consistency of values across the sector. Secondly, a set of recommendations on the display of flags and emblems in rural communities is provided, which includes: the need for greater research into attitudes towards flags and emblems in rural areas specifically; the creation of greater opportunities for dialogue between local people on this issue; the development of multi-agency partnership approaches and awareness raising programmes; and the documentation of models of

good practice to ensure sectoral learning. Five specific recommendations are proposed on the theme of housing, which again, included the need for further research, this time into the experiences of rural communities, their sense of attachment to land/place and the practical implementation of mixed tenure housing in rural areas. Significantly, the report recommends that planners are encouraged to actively consider the good relations implications of planning applications and to explore how best to encourage the integration of new communities into rural areas. The report helpfully explores the concept of 'rural interfaces', which it describes as 'harder to categorise and make tangible' but which 'could be related to townlands, extremely localised physical features, or a mindset that impacts on people's behaviour, trust and social patterns, replicated over generations, on both sides of the community divide' (2010: 8). Recommendations to address these interface includes: the support and encouragement of shared facilities and resources in local communities; the encouragement of community leaders to develop cross-community contact and the support for local groups to co-operate on issues of common concern within communities, and the challenge to planners to consider decisions which may impact on the development of shared spaces. Race and ethnicity is addressed by a series of recommendations, which include the need to address the capacity and development needs of those from, and working with, black and minority ethnic (BME) communities in rural areas; to explore the impact of the border for BME communities; to ensure that the positive contribution of BME communities is incorporated into culture, arts and tourism activities; and to support local government to develop action plans as part of their Section 75 good relations duties. The section on children and young people provided a set of six recommendations, which includes references of the need for: spaces for interaction and dialogue for young people, particularly those with no access to youth provision in rural communities; processes through which young people's voice can be heard in local governance mechanisms; and mechanisms to monitor how 'shared spaces' are used by young people in single-identity communities/areas. The final set of recommendations deal with the rural institutions (defined broadly and including institutions such as the Young Farmers, and those which have a particular impact on rural life, such as the PSNI or the GAA), which the report identifies as having a role to play in developing good relations. They include: the development of baselines of the current provision and position of rural institutions and the extent of their influence; acknowledgement of the influence of rural institutions on the wider rural population; and greater and more effective engagement of rural communities and the leaders of rural institutions. Longer versions of some of the papers presented in this policy document have been published elsewhere and are included in the bibliography at the end of this report.

The CRC and RCN also collaborated on the commissioning of a recent piece of research entitled *Beyond Belfast - Contested Spaces in Urban, Rural and Cross Border Settings* which aimed to go some way "to conceptualising and exploring the dynamics of segregation, division and community tensions in cities, towns and villages beyond Belfast" (Bell *et al*, 2010). Helpfully, this report draws the distinction between a 'contested space' and an 'interface', which it limits to those public spaces where physical barriers have been erected. Contested spaces are understood as a more common feature of rural communities, and it is their invisibility that can make them all the more pernicious to address. The report makes fifteen specific recommendations directed at individual government departments, local authorities and public agencies, as well as proposals to be considered by all departments. In policy terms, the report suggests that, in the development of the *Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration*, OFMdFM should ensure that the context of sectarianism, division and contested spaces is considered in both urban and rural terms and that a range of appropriate

indicators should be identified which can monitor 'contested spaces' in conjunction with key organisations based locally. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) is asked to consider how programmes and policies address, and take account of sectarianism and conflict, while it is recommended that the Department of Justice (DoJ) considers the continued use of security barriers in particular areas. Specific recommendations on policing are made in relation to the PSNI's recording and dissemination of sectarian violence, hate incidents, attacks on symbolic properties and structures. The report also recommends that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) record all incidents of sectarian violence and harassment that occur in its properties and publish them annually. Four recommendations for local councils relate to the development of their Good Relations Plans, the mapping and monitoring of contested spaces within their areas; the development of relevant indicators which can serve to monitor the health of relationships within and between communities and the implementation of reviews into 'defensive architecture' such as 'barriers protecting houses, estates and commercial buildings, closing off roads and dividing parks across the city' (2010: 46) within local council areas. Finally, it is recommended that the commissioning organisations, CRC and RCN, should develop a strategy for promoting shared learning of how to address sectarianism, tensions and violence in rural communities and take forward the work on contested spaces in rural areas through a similar structure to the Interface Working Group. Radford *et al's* (2009) paper on *Fields, Flags and Future Sharing* which provides an overview of rural perspectives on community relations is helpful in gaining an insight into the particular challenges facing rural communities in breaking down divisions and creating shared spaces.

The development of shared residential space in Northern Ireland has gained some momentum in recent years at a policy and practice level, and this has been reflected in the literature which explores the challenge of creating shared housing in more detail. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (2006) have created a good practice guide to *Flags, Emblems and Sectional Symbols* and have begun a programme of developing mixed residential public housing, as described in their *Shared Neighbourhood Programme* document (undated). Byrne *et al's* 2006 report *Shared Living* on mixed residential communities provided useful insights as to how certain neighbourhoods and communities became or remained mixed, despite the violent conflict, and what lessons might be learned from the local activities and engagements that ensure a level of mixing and integration of communities. Drawing on the data generated from the qualitative and quantitative fieldwork undertaken in three mixed residential areas, the authors conclude with ten recommendations, focusing on the implications for future shared living in Northern Ireland. In brief, the report recommends that a consultation should be undertaken to develop a standard terminology for usage in discussions on shared living; that any future policies related to shared living should be based on principles of choice and opportunity; that community development approaches should form a crucial component of any scheme related to shared living; that current commitments articulated in policy documents should be translated into operational action; that the development of shared living should incorporate the creation of shared spaces within the area; that targeted youth programmes should be developed; that indicators which measure health, social and economic well-being of communities be developed and monitored; that communities which are already identified as 'mixed' should be included in any future policies or actions; and finally, that all communities should have the opportunity to participate in mediation and community relations training.

ICR and Trademark (2008) completed a commissioned report for Belfast City Council (BCC) on

Shared Residential Space which contributes to the development of a body of research and literature that explores the persistent issue of segregation in the city. Eight specific recommendations, mainly targeted at the commissioning body were briefly detailed. These include recommendations on the establishment of an 'inter-agency group' which would include government departments, housing associations, funders, PSNI, CRC, Translink and others, and would provide support and guidance on shared housing initiatives, support a debate on the 'core constituents of a mixed housing area' (2008: 69) and ensure that consultations on any future shared housing schemes are representative, participative and comprehensive. It also includes specific recommendations for BCC and the NIHE to undertake longitudinal research to monitor various aspects of new shared housing developments; to engage with private developers and the construction industry federations and training bodies to ensure good relations' duties are understood and implemented (including the use of community consultation in sensitive areas) and to build the capacity of housing associations to facilitate their engagement in, and management of, shared housing developments and areas.

The legacy of segregation and inter-communal division has been a growing focus among researchers in recent years. New publications have been added to those which have previously explored the role of contact in fostering better relations between individuals and communities. Cairns *et al* (see bibliography under Hewstone, 2008; Cairns, 2007, 2008 & 2009; Schmid, 2009) have published extensively on intergroup trust, contact, forgiveness, segregation and social identity in academic journals including *Peace and Change*, *Journal of Conflict and Violence*, *Policy Studies* and the *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. They have also published more accessible reports for the OFMdFM and the Economic and Social Research Council. Cairns *et al*'s article on segregation published in 2007 in *Policy Studies* sets out to outline the emotional dimensions of segregation and division. Using qualitative research methodology, the authors explore issues of fear, anxiety and suspicion and how these emotional responses impact on individual and group decisions to engage in positive 'outgroup' relations. The research was conducted in two communities (Ballybeen and Andersonstown, selected as segregated working class areas of Belfast) and the findings highlight the respondents' experiences of having little or no contact with those from the 'other' community. The authors report on the impact of the past and the experience of negative memories as having a significant impact on people's emotional response to mixing with the 'outgroup'. The experiences of anxiety and fear are compounded and reinforced by the physical boundaries of territories, 'no go' areas and segregation in housing and other institutions. The report concludes with some reflections and recommendations that might usefully be considered by policymakers with responsibility for developing good relations objectives. Firstly, they note that paramilitary control over segregated, working class communities must be addressed as they serve to embed fear within their own communities, as well as acting as a strong deterrent to inter-group contact. It notes that government policy should ensure that funding does not go to short-term, politically motivated initiatives, which 'do little to engender the confidence of communities where freedom is often circumscribed by the criminal and sectarian practices of paramilitaries' (2007: 47) and serve to reinforce the status and legitimacy of paramilitaries and perpetuate the problems of division between communities. The authors recommend that government should, more structurally and comprehensively, address the issues of weak community infrastructure and lack of community development in disadvantaged communities. This might be achieved through support for 'common interest groups, such as women's organisations and faith-based groups' and 'providing opportunities for intergroup contact' in order to 'build bridges between divided communities'. The article notes the value of 'vicarious contact'

and the potential for a 'ripple effect' in such actions (2007: 48). Addressing so-called chill factors such as territorial marking and other 'physical manifestations of separateness' were also noted as possible developments which government policy should support, with notable examples of success already available. While acknowledging the role which inter-group contact can play in contributing towards reconciliation, the authors are keen to note that one should not conceptualise the problem in Northern Ireland as one which exists between the two main communities, which their research also identifies as being related to 'power relations' and 'systemic disadvantage' (2007: 41).

The 2008 article by Cairns *et al* in *Peace and Change* also draws on social-psychological literature as well as empirical research from two segregated (the same areas outlined previously) and one mixed communities in the Belfast area, reiterating the role that fear has in impacting on individuals' and communities' decisions to engage and mix with those from the 'out-group'. The research findings confirm that those from the mixed residential area were generally more receptive to those from 'the other' community than the residents of the segregated areas. They report: "This receptiveness translated as significantly less fear of out-group members, a relatively neutral opinion on the threat posed by them, greater willingness to engage with neighbors and other contacts known to be from the "other" community, and more widespread support for macro-level initiatives designed to promote better community relations." (2008: 538). The authors critique as "misguided" what they understand as the "underpinning premise in the current program for government, that the achievement of "equality" in Northern Ireland will, in and of itself, negate the need for relationship-building" (2008: 540). While acknowledging the role of equality as an element of good relations, they view this as a "socially constructed reality" with perceptions of equality being "filtered through social context and prevailing social attitudes" (2008: 540). A clear recommendation of the authors is to place relationship-building and cross-community contact at the forefront of future policymaking and to provide significant resources to support this approach.

The 2008 Hewstone *et al* report, published by OFMdFM reports on similar findings, based on empirical research from two segregated and two mixed areas of Belfast. In this instance, longitudinal survey data was used to investigate both direct, face-to-face contacts between individuals from the two main communities, as well as indirect contacts (such as the impact of knowing members of your own community who have direct contact with the 'outgroup' even if you do not). The evidence from the research suggests that real integration and mixing does occur among those who live in mixed neighbourhoods and that "mixing does not have to come at the cost of valued social interactions" (2008: 74). The authors note that their findings support the idea that policy developments for improving relations between communities should prioritise the development of more mixed housing, as it results in reductions in intergroup anxiety, even through only superficial contact and exposure. They note, however, that any initiatives aimed at increasing contact and mixing through housing should be designed to ensure friendship bonds between residents from different groups, which results in increased self-disclosure and greater changes in attitudes and perceptions of the 'other'. Any programmes or projects should not adopt a 'one-size-fits-all' model, however, and should consider whether different approaches may sometimes be required for members of the different communities. The research findings also support the idea that indirect contact should not be dismissed and that "this mild, non-threatening form of contact helps to 'prepare' people for later, direct contact, and leads to an increase in direct contact at a later date" (2008: 75). It can also help to 'model' positive intergroup relations and promote tolerance. In policy terms, the report concludes with two main

observations, based on the research evidence collected: firstly, that cross-community contact is effective, both in addressing issues of sectarianism and racism; and secondly, that contact has a causal or longitudinal effect on attitudes, and therefore, creating opportunities for contact should be central to policies aimed at improving relationships between currently divided communities. Hamilton *et al*'s 2008 report on *Segregated Lives in Northern Ireland* outlines the findings of a study of six areas of Northern Ireland, the levels of segregation and separation experiences by the residents of these areas and the extent to which it permeates every aspect of their lives. Clancy & Nagle's considered book, *Shared Society or Benign Apartheid?: Understanding Peacebuilding in Divided Societies*, published in 2010 provides an analytical framework of understanding how a society such as Northern Ireland can engage in a reframing of the debate about how and why sharing, rather than separation is vital in a post-violent context, drawing on international literature and case studies. The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey consistently provide data on public attitudes towards a range of issues related to inter-communal division. Lloyd & Robinson's (2008) ARK Research Update provides detail of the level of mixed relationships in Northern Ireland, with secondary analysis by age, income type and employment.

Cross-community interaction and sharing in the workplace has not attracted the same level of attention as other forms of sharing, perhaps because it is seen as an area which has been more comprehensively addressed, at least at a legislative level. However, some interesting research has emerged in this area in recent years, particularly from Dickson *et al*, focusing on how individuals - particularly those from segregated communities - adapt to working in mixed workplaces (see 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2009). The researchers undertook qualitative research with workers of organisations who employ people living in interface areas of Belfast in order to investigate how, and in what way, new employees learn to adapt and accommodate to a mixed workplace. The authors echo some common issues across their publications, focusing on the potential for the workplace to act as a vehicle for supporting relationship building and reconciliation, as it is one of the key societal contact points for people from different community backgrounds. In order to support this process, the reports provide a number of practical recommendations, including: the need for informative and effective induction processes for new employees, which would include community relations themes and issues, greater training for managers in communication skills on sensitive issues, and auditing of the employers' communication practices more broadly. In the article by Dickson *et al* in the *Journal of Applied Communication Research* the authors argue that managers have a role to play in encouraging, and creating opportunities for employees from different backgrounds to interact, ideally at both functional and social levels, "under sets of circumstances that maximize opportunities for it to lead to positive shifts in intergroup attitudes" (2008a: 153). The article notes that the work setting has been identified by previous social psychology research as an environment particularly conducive to this type of constructive outcome. The social aspects of employees interacting together was particularly stressed, given that, with the levels of segregation in Northern Ireland, individuals may have "little spontaneous opportunity for socializing together after working hours" (2008a: 153). This appeared to be particularly the case for those working in the private, rather than the public sector.

Acheson *et al* (2006, 2007) have also published the findings of a research project supported by the CRC that explored the impact of ethnic and religious divisions on community and voluntary sector organisations and their work. It addressed the question of how this sector might usefully contribute to the fostering of improved relations between communities, given its role and strength (not least as an

employer) in the society. The research evidence points to the significant 'ethno-sectarian divisions' which exists within the community and voluntary sector. It also notes the possibility of the sector acting as a vehicle through which high levels of cross-community contact take place. In concluding the findings of the research undertaken, which demonstrates the monoethnic nature of many community and voluntary sector organisations, the authors propose a set of recommendations to encourage greater cross-community activity and interaction within the sector. These include: a requirement for organisations engaged in the letting of contracts or service agreements for the delivery of public services to have equality impact assessment (based on the requirements of Section 75) in place; that financial resources be made accessible to organisations to engage external facilitation in the implementation of necessary changes in both organisational structures and attitudes which would have a bearing on relationships between communities; and that robust evaluation measures are developed that would capture the 'added value' of engagement in cross-community programming on the staff, volunteers, service users and organisation as a whole. The report concludes with a challenge to the sector as a whole:

Operational habits and assumptions that seek to protect this 'space' by putting a firewall between it and politics need to be set aside and a culture developed where awareness of, and questions about, the impact of a divided society on the work of organizations, and the impact of those organizations on a divided society, are at its heart (2006: 112).

An interesting piece of research on the role of the trade union movement in fostering good relations and promoting "a peaceful and inclusive society" was prepared by Brian Gormally (2008). This practically focused report provided a series of recommendations for both the Belfast Trades Council and the broader trade union movement in terms of both objectives and short and long-term goals. It concludes with a suggestion of a set of principles for good relations work into the future, including a focus on equality, human rights and diversity.

Literature continues to emerge on the changing nature of policing in Northern Ireland, following the reform implemented as proposed in the Patten Report of 1999. Jarman's 2006(b) report focused on the role of community-based initiatives related to policing. Byrne & Monaghan (2008) and Byrne's (2009) work on policing loyalist and republican communities provide contemporary primary research on the challenges of new types of community-focused policing. Leighton's recently prepared annotated bibliography on Community-Police Relations Issues (2011) for the Communities and Policing in Programme provides a detailed summary of recent literature in this area, including all locally focused documents. John Doyle's 2010 edited volume *Policing the Narrow Ground*, commissioned from the Royal Irish Academy by the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin and the Northern Ireland Office to mark the tenth anniversary of the Patten report on policing, provides a range of insights into the comprehensive transformation of policing in the region. These include a personal insight from Chris Patten on the chairing of the commission, reflections on the early challenges of building cross-community support for policing from Maurice Hayes and a section on the implementation of the various aspects of the new structures and institutions, including the Police Ombudsman's office, the Policing Board and District Policing Partnerships. Graham Ellison's chapter on current police-community relations highlights a number of challenges remaining, which he demonstrates through empirical research in North Belfast. These include the level of cross-community participation in the working of the institutions, the degree to which the PSNI has been able to foster trust within communities

which has previously been opposed to, or alienated from, the institutions, and the differential power relations that exist both spatially (particularly between neighbourhoods) and between communities.

Research on the experience and attitudes of children and young people toward the conflict, inter-communal division and sectarianism has generated new literature which contributes to our understanding of a new generation of young people growing up in post-ceasefires and post-Agreement Northern Ireland. Siobhan McEvoy-Levy's edited volume *Troublemakers or Peacemakers? Youth and Post-Accord Peace Building* includes a chapter on her own research in Northern Ireland and provides an interesting framework through which to view the experience of young people in societies emerging from conflict. Ulf Hansson's 2005 report on *Troubled Youth?* draws on research conducted in North Belfast and Derry/Londonderry, focusing on intra- and inter-community disorder and violence, and young people's role within it. It provides an insight into young people's motivations for engaging in violence, their perceptions of authority and the challenges that society needs to grapple with in order to address the pervasive culture of violence that is a legacy of the conflict in the region. The research identified a number of dominant motivations for engaging in violence and violence-provoking activities among young people, including: a perceived need to defend their own neighbourhood or area, perceived provocation from the 'other' side, and a general sense of boredom, resulting in less politically motivated but more 'recreational' rioting and anti-social behaviour. A recurring theme throughout the report was that there was a distinct 'lack of things to do' for young people, regardless of gender or community background. In relation to perceptions of authority, the research noted that, broadly speaking, relations with both the police and paramilitaries were based on fear and hostility, rather than trust or respect, and that young people in the areas under study felt an equal threat of violence and harassment from both formal and informal authority figures. Young people reported frustration felt at being labelled as 'troublemakers' and the source of local problems by the adult population, resulting in strained relations and mutual suspicion and poor levels of communication. Interestingly, it appeared from the research findings that young women had a more positive view of the police than young men. In addressing the culture of violence which has developed within these communities, the report concludes that the challenge for society is in addressing the high levels of youth alienation and lack of social engagement more broadly. In addition, the research makes a clear connection between antisocial behaviour and underage drinking and that new policies and initiatives are required to address this issue, within a broader framework of greater facility and opportunity provision for young people. While not providing any specific policy recommendations, the report reiterates what other research has previously noted: that "what is needed is a multi-agency approach to the issues of youth violence, involving representatives from the voluntary, community and statutory agencies (2005: 100). *The Childhood, Transition and Social Justice Initiative*, based at Queen's University Belfast, has generated a range of pertinent reports and articles on the experiences of young people growing up in Northern Ireland, which contribute to the debate on how the conflict continues to affect the new generations emerging (See Scraton, 2006/07, 2007; Haydon & Scraton, 2008; McAlister *et al*, 2009, 2010).

The Centre for Young Men's Studies, based at the University of Ulster, has also generated new and challenging research on the experience of young men in post-agreement Northern Ireland (See Lloyd, 2009; Harland, 2009; Harland & McCready, 2010). One piece of research conducted by Harland & McCready (2010) involved focus group conversations with 130 young men, aged 13-16, from both rural and urban communities across Northern Ireland. What emerged from the research in their

relationship with violence was a lack of trust among young men both towards other young men from the 'other' community, a "fluctuating ambivalence" about the continued role of paramilitaries, where they were still active in their communities, and daily concerns about violence and a range of personal experiences of violence. They also noted the limited experience of, and lack of incentive or appetite for contact with the 'other side' and a lack of tangible benefit from, or affiliation with, the peace process. The research also reported on the lack of personal safety felt by many respondents, their negative view of police and the prevalence or consideration of weapon carrying for personal protection. The authors note that new ways of addressing the needs of young men is required. The research shows the lack of interest the young men had in youth centres, with over half wanting more sports-related activities and facilities in their communities. The majority (95%) of respondents indicated an interest in learning skills to deal with violence and conflict, with only a small number (5%) reluctant to this suggestion because they saw it as taking away from the 'buzz' they get from engaging in violence. The report concludes with a range of recommendations, including the need for multi-agency approaches and partnerships to address the issues of marginalised young men, particularly in relation to violence and violence-related issues, noting that although examples of good practice currently exist in this regard, reductions in public spending could impact significantly on programming in this area. They also recommend the extension of school programmes for young men, as the respondents had indicated their increased feelings of safety within the school system. The schools and youth services could work more closely to deliver joint programming. A key good relations recommendation focused on the need to re-examine cross-community programmes to explore how to make areas feel safer for young men, rather than just focusing on people and how young men perceive those from the "other side." The authors note: "The rationale for this is that conflict and safety are so strongly interwoven with geography and territory that any strategy will have to focus on places as well as people" (2010: 8). The report also indicates that, as regular dates in the calendar tend to exacerbate tensions within communities, there is a need for youth orientated initiatives during these times. This should involve violence-awareness programmes which would offer young men an alternative to recreational violence by combining activity-based interventions and conflict resolution skills development. Healy (2006) has also conducted research on young people, focused on the experience of ethnic segregation and community conflict on Protestant girls in Belfast, published in *Children and Society*. The research undertaken on behalf of Barnardo's, focused on a qualitative case study of girls in a loyalist community in Belfast, explores and demonstrates the early significance of locality on the development of identity and the experience of residential segregation and community conflict. The research concludes with recommendations on the importance of engaging directly with young people to explore their own lived experiences of growing up in a segregated community which continues to experience community conflict, in order to develop policies and practices best suited to affect positive change in their lives.

The Young Life and Times Survey, which has sought the views of a sample of 16-year olds in Northern Ireland on a range of social issues since 2003, have generated a range of relevant publications which seek to analyse and contextualise the research findings. The edited volume by Schubotz & Devine (2008) on *Young People in post-conflict Northern Ireland* provides an analysis of a range of responses to thematic questions posed. Of particular relevance is the chapter by Duncan Morrow on the *Attitudes to Community Relations Among Young People 2003-2007*. Devine & Schubotz's (2010) more recent article, published in the CRC's *Shared Space Journal*, updates on trends and argues for patience towards the new generation of young people, and action at a policy level to support change,

although it does not detail specific policy recommendations. The bibliography also includes a range of Research Updates, based on the findings of this annual survey (See Schubotz & Robinson, 2006; Schubotz & McCartan, 2008; Irvine & Schubotz, 2010).

Education, and particularly the mixing and integration of schooling in Northern Ireland, continue to be the focus of new research and reflection. Focusing on the role of contact, Cairns & Niens (2005) reflect on the experience of Northern Ireland to date, while McGlynn *et al* (2004) explore the contribution of integrated schools in Northern Ireland to identity, attitudes and reconciliation. Hayes *et al* (2006) report on the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey data on the impact of integrated education on political attitudes, concluding that one of the interesting findings of the research was that irrespective of religion, individuals who had attended an informally or formally integrated school were significantly more likely to reject traditional identities and allegiances than those who had attended a segregated one. The work of the *Schools Working Together* project, based at Queen's University, Belfast focused on exploring school collaboration and sharing has been published in a number of reports, which includes a review of literature (Atkinson *et al*, 2007) and a report on the development of school collaboration as an opportunity for reconciliation (Donnelly & Gallagher, 2008; Gallagher *et al*, 2010). In 2010, the Integrated Education Fund commissioned Oxford Economics to develop a scoping paper on the economic case for shared education in Northern Ireland which provides the basis for a discussion of the financial benefits of shared education during economically straitened times. The Good Relations Forum's report into the good relations requirements in schools (2010) recommended that good relations become a compulsory part of the school curriculum and that local schools are encouraged to work together, particularly on a cross-community basis.

'Dealing with the past' issues in Northern Ireland have gained increasing prominence in recent years, unsurprisingly a contentious and politically loaded issue for many. Following the 1998 Agreement, a growing body of literature has developed on how Northern Ireland should deal with the past, some of which has drawn extensively on the experiences of other societies which have emerged from violent conflict. Much of the literature has focused on community-based or bottom-up approaches to addressing the legacies of the conflict. The work of Lundy & McGovern on documenting the process of building a repository of testimonies related to deaths in the Ardoyne area of North Belfast (see 2005, 2006, 2008) has been a significant contribution to the debate on the role of community-based storytelling and testimony work. The community-based organisation, Healing Through Remembering commissioned an audit of personal story, narrative and testimony initiatives related to the conflict in or about Northern Ireland in 2005, which provided, for the first time, an overview of the range and breadth of work being undertaken to document people's personal experiences of the conflict, from a range of perspectives, and utilizing a range of approaches. This was followed by the development of a publication on *Ethical Principles - Storytelling and Narrative Work* in 2009(a) to inform the development of future work in this area. This work complements a range of other reports produced by Healing through Remembering to stimulate discussion and debate on how this society can address and deal with the past. These include the comprehensive *Making Peace with the Past: Options for truth recovery regarding the conflict in and about Northern Ireland* (2006a), a legal opinion piece on the viability of prosecution based on historical enquiry (2006b), a research report on *Acknowledgement and its role in Preventing Future Violence* (2006c) and a practical, workshop-based *Conversation Guide on Dealing with the Past*. The organisation has also conducted research on the concept of "days of reflection and remembrance" in an international context (2006d),

a scoping study and discussion paper on the viability of a day of reflection for Northern Ireland (2006e).

The Report of the *Consultative Group on the Past* (2009), which was established by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in June 2007, provides a range of recommendations on how the society might deal with the legacy of the conflict. This consultation process generated a significant number of detailed written responses from organisations and individuals – too numerous to reference in this document – but all of which add to the development of thinking and writing in this challenging area. An ICR report and article on young people's understanding of the past entitled *The Troubles Aren't History Yet* (see Bell *et al*, 2010; McCafferty & Hansson, 2011) analyses the results of a questionnaire survey of 958 young people and 28 focus groups in twelve locations across Northern Ireland which sought to explore the ways in which history is taught to young people, their knowledge of recent and historical events and how and where young people learn about the past. The research findings present a complex pattern of knowledge attainment, which includes the formal education system, school trips to museums and other sites, as well as via parents, relatives and the media, particularly as it relates to the more recent past. The research findings point to sketchy awareness of key historical and more recent events among respondents, with their knowledge being strongly influenced by their community and background and place of residence. It also notes the interest that young people have in learning about history and their wish that the formal education system allowed for increased opportunities to discuss and reflect on significant past events.

New literature continues to emerge on the impact of the conflict on victims/survivors. Accessible papers by McDowell (2007) and Nagle (2009) provide useful summaries of policy developments on victims/survivors issues since the mid-1990s in particular. Reports by McDougall (2007) in her role as Interim Commissioner for Victims/Survivors, and the report by Social Research Centre & Associates (2009) commissioned by the Commission for Victims and Survivors provide detailed insights into the particular needs and existing supports for those most affected by the conflict. Additional work by Potter (2004), Templar & Radford (2007, 2008), Manktelow (2007), McGlone & Stinson (2006), Donnan & Simpson (2007), Beyers (2009) and the Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma and Transformation (2008) all provide new insights into the needs and experiences of those identified as victims/survivors. Research continues to develop on the role and experiences of former political prisoners following the Agreement of 1998. The Community Relations Council published a report by Shirlow *et al* in 2005 on the role of former prisoners in community activism and conflict transformation (see also Shirlow *et al*, 2008) and two of the authors of these reports, McEvoy and Shirlow, published a comprehensive discussion on the role of ex-prisoners in conflict transformation in their 2008 book, *Beyond the Wire*. Shirlow has also published (with Tonge and Mcauley, 2010) on the role of political prisoners in reconciliation processes in Northern Ireland.

The broad topic of reconciliation in Northern Ireland has been further explored by (see Hamber & Kelly 2005, 2008, 2009 and Kelly & Hamber, 2005) and provides a working definition of reconciliation. This research sought to provide some clarity to the challenge of defining what aspects of society require attention on a context of moving from violence to peace. Robin Wilson's *What works for reconciliation?* report for Democratic Dialogue (2006a) and chapter (2006b) in *Shared Space* contribute to this on-going discussion about the practice of reconciliation and its appropriateness in the Northern Ireland context. Magill *et al* (2010) explores the role of education in reconciliation,

drawing on comparative research with Bosnia, while Gladys Ganiel (2010) reflects on the public role of religion in reconciliation, diversity and ecumenism in Northern Ireland. The funding and support for good relations and reconciliation work was outlined in some detail in the Operational Programme for the PEACE III EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (2007) providing an overview of the challenges facing this post-Agreement context and the intended contribution of the programme in areas such as 'dealing with the past' and 'shared spaces'. The history and the impact of the International Fund for Ireland was documented extensively in 2008 (McCready) and provides an examination of the role of one external grantmaker and its contribution to peacebuilding over the course of over twenty years of intervention.

Interestingly, one area which has not seen much recent development in terms of easily accessible materials is the *practice* of community or good relations. In 2006, Helen Lewis documented the new trends in community development practice, and made the explicit links with its role and intersection with community relations work, while the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland developed an extensive, yet accessible report on *Good Practice in Community Development* (2009). Kelly's (2006) report for Belfast City Council on *Community Engagement, Good Relations and Good Practice* went some way to documenting the various typologies of good relations practice in Northern Ireland. MacBride's (2008) *Good Practice in Conflict Transformation*, also for Belfast City Council documents a range of examples of what it views as good practice, focusing on work that has originated from, or been instigated, supported or championed by statutory agencies. It may be that much of the documentation of practice in this area is confined to programme and project evaluations, the detail of which is beyond the scope of this research.

One criticism that has been levied at decision makers has been the inconsistent usage of quality research to inform policy development and implementation. It is clear from a review of less than a decade of new literature that a wealth of both qualitative and quantitative data, as well as recommendations and proposals for future planning is available. It is incumbent on researchers to ensure that the results of their work are made accessible and understandable to those who may make practical use of their findings. It is also vital that policy formulators ensure that their decisions are based on empirical and evidence-based work, and that, where appropriate, quality research undertaken is given due consideration and attention when new policies are being developed or reviewed.

4. Successes to Date

The first question asked of all interviewees was to reflect on what they believe to be the successes in moving Northern Ireland society towards a 'shared and better future'. All interviewees were asked to reflect on the question posed in both broad and narrow terms, to include what they viewed as the overarching changes which have contributed to the development of 'good relations' or 'reconciliation', as well as any specific policies, initiatives, projects or approaches they might wish to highlight that have demonstrated positive outcomes. The language used within the questions posed was important, as the researcher was seeking to minimise the influence of particular phrases or terminology which may provoke particular responses. As noted previously, however, one remains conscious that, in this context, some words have implied meanings and can be associated with particular perspectives and ideological positions. The language of more recent policy documents was used in this instance, as this would be familiar to many of the respondents to the research.

As with the other interview questions, the responses have been categorised under the broad thematic headings to which they referred. When analysing the responses, consideration was given to the conflation of the first two questions related to successes to date and outstanding challenges remaining. The respondents often noted some developments or improvements in one thematic area, while going on to say that there was still much room for further work to be achieved. However, it was felt important to present the materials as they were addressed by the interviewees. There is inherent value in focusing on achievements and successes, as this serves as a reminder of the journey already travelled and the progress made to create a 'shared and better future' by a range of actors. That being said, it is important to read all sections of the report, to ensure that a rounded view of the issues raised is achieved.

Political Structures and Processes

Undoubtedly, the most common response from interviewees related to the political changes at both regional and local levels, as well as the development of new structures and processes which support and demonstrate good relations and reconciliation across society as a whole.

- **New political structures bedding down and stability emerging**

Virtually all interviewees indicated that the relative stability that has come with devolved government has contributed greatly to the creation of both an *atmosphere* of good relations and a practical *demonstration* of how the development of working relations with political adversaries is possible. It was particularly noted that, with the transferring of policing and justice powers from Westminster to Stormont in 2010, there was a sense that the full complement of devolved powers had finally been achieved. As one respondent, from the community and voluntary sector put it:

The main progress can be seen in relation to the political institutions. This is really long-term societal change at work. The institutions appear to be working well enough.

However, he was quick to temper his praise, as he went on to say, “Well. They will do. At least the political vacuum is lessening.”

The length of time that the current Assembly has been ‘up and running’ following challenging stop-start periods and reversion to direct rule was also mentioned by a number of respondents. As one political sector respondent put it:

This has well demonstrated the contact hypothesis with meaning. They are quirky relationships that have had to be devised because of the nature of the society, but they are being demonstrated to be working.

Another political sector respondent spoke of the positives that have come through learning to work collaboratively with those from differing political perspectives:

There are many examples of joint working that have been identified and accepted. It is often the case that issues that you might feel are completely opposed to your position, and we are on complete opposites on; we can find some common ground and some areas which we can work on. We cannot ignore those areas in which we disagree, but by engaging with the issue, common agendas can emerge.

Another respondent, working within the public body, also reflected on the positives that have come from the bedding-in of the new political dispensation.

There are positives, because the politics we have now are a significant demonstration of sharing. There are a variety of ways of sharing. You can share a train carriage. There is no real knowing and understanding there. It can be entirely casual. We have a lot of that here. Or there can be active sharing of politics, which is happening regionally and locally, and that is really significant. Politicians don’t always see this sharing themselves. Of course there are individual personality tensions, but these will, hopefully, mature over time.

While many respondents expressed a general welcome at the success of establishing the Assembly, a number indicated that the widespread acceptance of devolution at a public level was worthy of specific emphasis. One respondent, from a public body indicated, however, that there is a tendency to focus on the challenges, rather than the successes:

I believe that the successes in politics are both under-reported and under-appreciated. Politics is conflictual. Anyone who doesn’t understand that doesn’t understand politics. In Northern Ireland, we see the conflict at Stormont as something of an aberration. It is not. The difficulty is that, in Northern Ireland, people are used to being in oppositional mode, because that was the only mode that was available under direct rule. There is a paradox however, that while now sharing power, they are still in adversarial mode.

The positive responses provided were tempered with hesitancy at times. While one community and voluntary sector respondent welcomed the establishment of a locally elected Assembly, he was quick to indicate what he believed were its shortcomings.

The establishment of the Assembly is great. But decisions are not being made there. At least they were being made under direct rule. If we were to look at the balance sheet, they have not made brave decisions. They need to be held accountable for the decisions they have not made in the last number of years.

This praise - made with reservations - illustrates the caveat placed above, that while successes are welcomed, respondents indicated that outstanding issues remain to be addressed. This issue will be returned to later.

- **Evidence of commitment of local government structures to demonstrate and support good relations**

In addition to the positive indications from respondents in relation to the devolved administration, a number also spoke of the positive contribution that local government has increasingly played in supporting both the concept of good relations and committing to the development of more collegial and collaborative working within - and outside - the council chambers. This, it appeared from the responses given, goes beyond the statutory commitments of local authorities and points to a broader change in the culture of local government which is increasingly supportive of locally-taken initiatives and proactive in developing their own programmes of work. A number of respondents working in community-based structures made reference to the commitment and support – both financial and practical – they have received from their local councils, and particularly those officers with dedicated good relations responsibilities. Others pointed to a lessening in the adversarial language used by local councillors towards their political opponents, both in the council chamber and in the media, which they indicated as showing positive leadership and effective role-modelling.

Two community sector interviewees spoke of being “pleasantly surprised” when local politicians choose not to “score points” by publicly challenging their political opponents in times when they may have been tempted to do so for possible electoral gain. One council official, with responsibility for good relations, noted:

There is still a fine line between what you can bring up at council and what you cannot. But more often than not, they don't have a problem with it now. There has been a maturing of relationships within local council. They see the benefits of good relations for the district as a whole.

The same interviewee speculated that one reason for this maturing of relationships may be the result of “a new generation of leaders coming through.” A political party respondent, who has worked at both local government and Assembly level, indicated that, in his experience, the cross-party and cross-sectoral structures that have been established to address issues such as community safety and the administration of EU PEACE funding has aided communication between local councillors, and has “put manners on them.”

In broad terms, the responsibilities for good relations programming at District Council level through the OFMdFM-supported ‘Community Relations Programme’ were referred to in positive terms.

In particular, responses noted the longevity of the programme, established in 1989. While this Programme has been supported for over two decades, it is worth noting that qualitative research conducted by Hamber & Kelly (2005) had previously indicated that many respondents were of the view that local councils were not the most appropriate location for increased good relations activities and responsibilities. The majority of respondents to this previous research indicated that the political environment of local politics in Northern Ireland was too adversarial, partisan and, at times sectarian, for good relations work to be given the attention it warranted. However, the respondents to this research indicated significantly increased confidence in local governments' ability to effectively deliver on a cross-party basis. One respondent from a major funding programme noted:

The councils are working and planning together and putting together multi-level actions. They are practically addressing community relations, community planning and well-being. Their competencies and capacities have been developed and built. It is a real success of normalisation that the local authorities see this as their role now.

For some respondents, one of the successes of the Community Relations Programme is the employment of dedicated council officers with direct responsibility for either 'good relations' or 'community relations' in each council borough. One interviewee from a funding organisation put it: "In some [councils] they are very good. But it only works when they are allowed the space to breathe." A Good Relations Officer interviewed noted a significant change in the type of work which is now supported by elected representatives. She explained:

At the start it probably was about organising tea dances. We were heavily criticised for that, but it was the only form of work that could be done at that time. But we have taken a tremendous leap and learning curve in terms of the issues we tackle head-on now.

Of those who identified this as an area of success, respondents welcomed the more direct lead taken by local authorities to address the persistent challenges associated with bonfires, territorial marking, public disorder and interface areas. One council official noted that the presence of dedicated staff with responsibility for addressing problem issues provides demonstrable value-for-money. She notes:

This is money well spent in terms of the presence and active participation in the communities. We are where things happen. The resource is seen in the time we spend. With Community Relations Officers a lot is about the additionality and use of time. It is not really about the small grants that we can give. We do a lot of work promoting good relations, sitting on steering groups, providing advice, setting up forums, running small projects. We see the work as fundamental to what we do to ensure good relations in our boroughs.

An added benefit, noted by another council official is that, with their assistance, community organisations and voluntary groups can identify issues requiring attention and leverage in additional funding or expertise to work on specific programmes of work.

The continuity of service of council officials with responsibility for good relations in some areas, who have built strong local knowledge, networks and partnerships, was also identified as a success. With the stability which has come with the long-term support of the District Council Programme, several

interviewees noted positive outcomes, including the ability to test out new initiatives, to embed relationships, to take the lead on the development of projects, and to identify emerging issues of contention within local areas. It is worth noting, however, that this was not a consistent picture across all responses – with one respondent from the community sector indicating that his organisation’s experience has been of a hands-off and disinterested council.

Several respondents raised the ongoing discussion of where good relations departments or officers should be best placed within local council structures. Although this programme was not the direct focus on the research, a number of interviewees articulated their views on this. While there has been some suggestion that Good Relations Officers should be placed centrally within Council, such as within the Chief Executive’s Office, the need for a more flexible and context-appropriate approach was articulated. It was noted that it was dependent on a number of factors related to the individual council structures. As one interviewee pointed out:

Regardless of where the CRO is based, it cannot be cramped by bureaucracy. We need to be able to try new things and cannot be hemmed in. We have to be able to experiment and learn from that.

Three separate interviewees identified the maturing of relationships between locally elected representatives, the community and voluntary, statutory and business sectors, working together to develop partnership structures for the delivery of EU PEACE funding at a sub-regional level as a significant success. Since the mid-1990’s, the PEACE Programme has sought to develop cross-sectoral partnerships in an effort to stimulate multi-agency working practices and the development of new relationships and networks which can tackle issues arising. It was noted that, to an extent, these new linkages made have sustained well over time. The more recent PEACE III Programme requires local authorities to work in clusters with neighbouring councils, and this was noted by several interviewees to be “an achievement in itself” and “a surprising success, given the local politics of it all.” One interviewee from the grantmaking sector’s view was that:

There have been very challenging legal and administrative issues to overcome and these have required persistence and patience. However, it appears that local ownership of the programme has taken place ... A very positive success in these terms.

That being said, while a number identified the positive developments that have been made, there was an abiding sense from many that there remains room for improvement at local government level. Some councils continue to be more progressive and proactive in supporting concepts and practices of good relations than others.

- **Development and implementation of relevant policy initiatives**

As indicated previously, the fieldwork for this research straddled the period prior to, and following, the release of the *Cohesion, Sharing and Integration* Consultation Document in July 2010. While many references were made to the document – both positive and negative – a number of respondents made the more general observation that a more conducive atmosphere to the development of policies

which sought to manage or improve relations at various levels of society was increasingly perceptible. Five respondents identified the previous *Shared Future Policy Framework* as a significant milestone in the development of more comprehensive policy decisions at both intra- and cross-departmental levels, something that they felt could be built upon in future policy frameworks. While significant concerns were raised with regard to the more recent *CSI* consultation document, a number of those interviewed did view the current developments as a success in terms of keeping the issue at the forefront of the policy debate. As one respondent from a funding body put it:

In terms of the *CSI* document, we are delighted to see something coming out. We are hoping this will result in robust dialogue and it is good to see that there are so many public events taking place. It is very important to have robust exchanges to help with the development of policy. Now that the document is out, it gets the process opened up. The *CSI* Strategy will hopefully help with the mainstreaming of reconciliation into government policies and departments.

In addition to the ongoing development of an agreed direction for the prioritisation of good relations in government policy, a number of interviewees identified what they saw as increased commitment of government departments to proactively address inter-communal divisions – particularly those which are having a detrimental effect on both the economic and social environment with which they have responsibility. This was not, in all cases, credited to the devolution of power to local political leaders. Rather it was articulated more generally as a consequence of the heightened awareness of the need to promote sharing and integration for pragmatic, practical and financial reasons. One departmental official identified a significant change in a particular government department. She observed how, in her view, a perceptible shift was evident over the space of seven years from officials privately stating that good relations was “not our business”, to the development of policies specifically aimed at promoting the concept of sharing as a clear imperative. She went on to say:

This has changed considerably and now everyone, at least in [a government department], accepts that this is the responsibility of all. However, I am not so sure that this is the case in other departments ... There is momentum in some departments in relation to the shared future agenda, but by no means all.

A statutory sector interviewee, with responsibility for good relations policy developments in his thematic area, noted that while some departments appear to be more receptive than others, “it is important to say that they have not met any real political resistance, although not always public support.” A number of respondents, from a variety of sectors, also praised the work of the Community Relations Council, the Equality Commission and other sectoral interest organisations in contributing to the development and monitoring of social and public policy which impacts on good relations and in raising awareness of the need to embed good relations objectives in policy formulation and implementation. One respondent noted the importance of organisations responding to policy consultations and providing advice and leadership to other organisations to do similar, as an imperative to ensuring the influence of civil society in policy development.

Changes in Security Context

Under the broad theme of security, two key successes were identified by respondents, the former being referenced significantly more frequently than the latter.

- **Significant reduction in violence and greater sense of stability**

Contemporaneously with the achievement of greater stability at a political level has been a significant reduction in the levels of violence previously seen during the height of the conflict. While acknowledging that pockets of unrest and tension continue to exist and emerge sporadically, a majority of interviewees pointed to the real contribution that the reduction in violence has made to the improvement of relations within, and between, communities to date. In broad macro terms, the significant reduction in violence – particularly of a sectarian and tit-for-tat nature – was highlighted as a positive change that has gone some considerable way in contributing to an atmosphere of increased confidence and trust between communities.

Many of those who contributed to the research also noted that the more recent reduction in violence associated specifically with the issue of contentious parades was particularly welcomed. The specific powers at the disposal of the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Parades Commission were particularly referenced in this respect. A number also highlighted what they saw as notable reductions in tensions around some of the more capricious interface areas, contributing to a more positive atmosphere, not only within these specific areas but also regionally. It was also noted that a reduction in tensions and violent unrest provided an opportunity to present the region in a more positive light internationally. This, it was hoped, would bring positive economic benefits in both inward investment and tourism opportunities. Of those respondents who raised this issue, the majority noted that this change had occurred as a result of the commitment and engagement of political and community leaders on both sides, and the support of funding organisations and government departments to tackle the multiple challenges facing affected communities and areas. As one community sector respondent noted:

In areas where there had been sporadic violence, this has lessened considerably. There is greater social empowerment and communities are in much greater contact with one another.

However, interviewees were far from complacent about the levels of violence that continue to surface and a number cautioned against the possibility that an “acceptable level of violence”, as one respondent noted, might be tolerated as part of the inevitable cultural landscape of the region. One community-based respondent noted the significant reduction in punishment beatings and shootings within his specific context, which he attributed to the work within paramilitary groups to transform previous practices and develop positive leadership skills. Many respondents identified the threat posed by “spoiler” or “dissident” groups, although the perceived level of threat associated with this development was assessed differently by respondents. This issue will be revisited in reporting on identified issues which remain outstanding and which impact on good relations and reconciliation processes.

- **Transformation of policing structures and processes**

A small number of respondents referenced the re-visioning and reframing of policing in Northern Ireland as a significant contribution to the amelioration of relationships in recent years. This was articulated in two ways. Firstly, that the transformation of the former Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) into the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI) indicated a break from patterns of the past and that the new mechanisms reflected the make-up of the community more accurately, demonstrating a commitment to principles of equality and human rights. Secondly, that the more recent change in Sinn Féin's position in relation to policing structures and participation on the Policing Board and other community policing partnerships, sent out a clear message of local ownership of the process of change and acceptance of the legitimacy of the new structures developed. As one respondent from the political sector noted:

The transformation of policing and the devolution of policing and justice must be seen as significant steps forward. It shows the sea-change in attitudes. Acceptance around these issues is very significant.

A sizeable number of other respondents briefly referenced the changes in policing as a significant success to date, but did not expand further on their comment.

Social and Economic Levers of Change

A range of responses focused on what could broadly be framed as changes in the social and economic context of Northern Ireland, and the impact and influence of such changes on the development of good relations in the context of a 'shared and better future'.

- **Socio-economic disadvantage and differentials acknowledged and targeted**

A number of interviewees indicated that the initiatives aimed at physical and economic regeneration as well as social investment in the local population, should be framed as a positive contribution to the development of good relations, both within and between communities. While, in general, opinions varied as to how directly socio-economic improvements correlate to the development of good relations more broadly, the majority indicated that the two issues could not be de-coupled and should be viewed as mutually dependent. One community-based respondent identified the economic regeneration initiatives which have taken place in his area as hugely significant. In particular, he highlighted the importance of "single-identity communities" engaging, and ultimately partnering, with neighbouring areas where there had previously been significant tension and unrest as a practical example of "success". He went on to say:

The economic regeneration that has taken place has been really significant. For a long time, the community here did not feel the effect of a peace dividend. This community felt as disadvantaged as it has been before. But with the work that has now been done to the area, this is their peace dividend. Our relationships with our neighbours have been built through building the economic context ... Through this we can see what is, and can be, achieved. No one needs to sacrifice their political aspirations but we can work together.

The specific targeting of areas of highest deprivation for government-led intervention was also identified as making a positive contribution beyond the obvious physical and economic renewal targets. The approach of engaging directly with community workers to ensure local ownership was welcomed, as was the establishment of multi-agency structures to ensure a more holistic, less siloed approach to interventions made. As noted previously, the identification of common socio-economic issues across previously divided or unconnected communities or neighbourhoods and the development of joint projects were highlighted as useful methodological approaches to ensure both efficiencies of intervention and cross-community engagement. As one community-based respondent put it:

[Specific area] isn't big enough to address deprivation on a single-identity basis. We need to look at how job and training opportunities can be created and shared. We all have a stake in this. There are some positive economic interventions taking place across the city. We need to maximise these positive developments.

The influence of funders in requiring applicant organisations and lead projects to take cognisance of, and design processes whereby cross-community activities are embedded in socio-economic focused projects, was noted as a contributing factor in the development of collaborative working across previous divisions.

- **Indications of increased sharing in other social and public contexts**

During the course of the interviews, the majority of respondents made brief reference to what they saw as positive developments in the areas of shared education and shared housing, often without further extrapolation. However, on both issues, positive comments made were generally tempered with phrases such as “of limited impact”, “not supported politically” or “having local support, but requiring external intervention”. One respondent did note that increasing evidence of mixing of Catholics and Protestants in the school system (outside of the integrated sector) demonstrated the “realities and practicalities of sharing in these economic times” and the growing acceptance of pupils and parents to “put their education before their ideology or religious beliefs.”

- **Removal of some of the manifestations of division**

A small number of respondents indicated that, from their perspective, the removal or re-imaging of what could be described as “expression[s] of political and cultural identity” (Bryan *et al*, 2010) has been a positive change and a contribution to better relations between communities. Respondents indicated that the territorial marking of geographical areas, through flag flying and kerbstone and mural painting has underlined the segregated nature of living in Northern Ireland, and that their removal contributes to the creation of “more welcoming” and “less intimidating” atmosphere. One community-based respondent noted:

A lot of the problem that people have about this area has to do with perceptions. The removal of the manifestations of sectarianism has been important. It has created a more neutral setting, which hopefully can become a more shared place over time.

While acknowledging that the removal of physical expressions of identity can be helpful in the development of shared spaces, one respondent questioned the “manner in which this has happened.” She went on to say: “I sometimes worry that this is a cosmetic exercise, that hasn’t really got to the heart of the issue.” Another statutory sector respondent noted what he saw as the positive work being undertaken at local government level in managing the “expressions of identity issue” and exploring what is “acceptable”, noting the development of flags protocols and mediated solutions to contentious issues.

- **Significant economic support provided by external grantmakers**

A significant number of respondents highlighted the support – both moral and financial – that has been provided by external parties to support and embed peace in the region. This was noted as having made a significant impact on the building up of community capacity, establishment of networks and raising the profile of good relations and reconciliation as concepts which require proactive engagement. It was noted by one respondent that, without this external support over the past two decades in particular, Northern Ireland might be facing “different, and perhaps much more serious, challenges” than are currently the case.

A number of respondents particularly highlighted the contribution made by the European Union, in the form of PEACE monies – albeit, these comments were tempered by some negative comments on the weight of bureaucracy that these grants placed on the community and voluntary sector, addressed further below. Another respondent spoke of the contribution of independent grantmakers, such as Atlantic Philanthropies, which has a specific focus on supporting collaborative working across sectors and aims to encourage government departments to commit to mainstreaming good relations work at a statutory level. This approach was welcomed by some, although one indicated that “we will have to see the long term success of this. We don’t know enough about how they work yet.”

The opportunity to explore and test out innovative approaches to good relations and peacebuilding was raised by two respondents and was viewed as a welcome contribution to developments in the field. Some specific examples were cited, including the work with former combatants and former political prisoners, support for the development of new approaches to shared education and the development of sharing housing schemes. As one interviewee stated, once this type of innovative work has been implemented successfully and practical changes have been made, “it will be hard to undo this work, which is positive.” As mentioned previously, the partnership-working dimensions introduced by some external funders were also referenced positively, as was the focus on building the capacity of individuals and communities to take local ownership and responsibility for affecting change.

- **Collaborative working across and between sectors taking shape**

A number of interviewees spoke of the broadening of the sectoral areas which now recognise the role they can play in supporting good relations in the region. This includes the private and business sector, which many respondents felt had only more recently engaged publicly in ‘relationship-

building' initiatives. They indicated that the community and voluntary sector has carried the bulk of responsibility in this area previously. Others, however, indicated little surprise that the private sector had "shied away" from the issue, one noting that the sector is "hemmed in by legislation" and "fear of litigation" which, he felt, stymied their engagement. That being said, a small number felt that the business sector was increasingly willing to engage and contribute – particularly around socio-economic barriers which may be hindering individuals' and communities' abilities to enter the workplace, or to engage with people outside of their own family or social circles. The business sector's increasing engagement with statutory bodies and the creation of new geographically-focused networks were cited as examples of new opportunities for relationship-building and joint-working. As one business sector respondent noted: "Employers are not experts on good relations, but are keen to be involved in whatever ways would be useful."

The development of collaborative working practices between the community and voluntary and statutory sectors was also noted as a growing area for development and enhancement. The work of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in the development of shared housing schemes was cited as an example of effective cross-sectoral working, as was the work of several councils in addressing contentious issues such as bonfires, anti-social behaviour and territorial marking. As one statutory sector respondent noted: "It is about creating that spider's web of connections with other bodies, vertically, horizontally and diagonally, that makes a difference." He went on to say:

Because we have taken time to build up the relationships, we now understand the infrastructure in which we are working. We know how to navigate both the public bodies and the often complex community structures. We know how to get people to come around the table. We recognise that some bodies have more clout and if you ask groups to come around the table, they can make it happen.

The work of dedicated organisations, such as the Community Relations Council and regional structures, including those established or led by government departments or local councils, was widely acknowledged as having assisted with the establishment and maintenance of relationships. These central hubs of information sharing have, according to several respondents, ensured that duplication of work or services is less likely and resources are used more efficiently.

○ **Significant contact and sharing in the workplace**

Only a small number of respondents indicated that the increasing integration of workplaces over the past decades was a significant contribution to the building of positive relationships. Perhaps respondents view this issue as a more accepted and incorporated reality, particularly given the incremental introduction of legislative provision aimed at ensuring that fair employment practices are implemented and that systems of recourse are readily available in their absence. As one public sector respondent noted:

If Fair Employment legislation did nothing but raise people's awareness and develop a consciousness of the need for a structured approach, then it has done a lot. Of course, it did do a lot more than that. But this alone is very important. The workplace is the place where

there is possibly greater interconnection in life in Northern Ireland. People do encounter each other in work ... There is the opportunity to be exposed to other people and other identities.

Another respondent, from the community and voluntary sector noted:

In the employment field, shared workplaces are a significant pointer to what is possible. This did not, however, happen by accident. It required policy intervention, legislation to support it, institutional support and it required - and continues to require - monitoring. All of this structure has impact and effect. It is this type of intervention that is needed in other areas.

One political representative noted:

You cannot overstate the impact of a mixed workplace on improving relationships, I don't think. However, when you compare it to what was and, not necessarily where you would like it to be, it is good progress. You cannot overegg it, but it is still an important place of contact.

A final respondent, from the political sector also noted integrated workplaces as a positive success to date, placing much of people's increased ability to work, and to feel safe to travel elsewhere for work, as having been greatly increased by the political stability and decrease in violence. However, he added a note of caution in the current context: "There is some significant work to be done, particularly given the economic downturn. A lot of good work could be undone, if we do not manage this well."

Relationship Building and Cultural, Attitudinal and Behaviour Change

o Community trust forming and relationships building

The significant focus of responses focused on relationship building, referring to identifiable successes within local and community-based structures, processes and activities. In broad terms, a large proportion of interviewees noted that considerable progress had been made in the connections created, relationships formed, and collaborative working practices established across previously accepted and long-standing divides. These divisions were not simplistically portrayed as those between traditional Catholic and Protestant 'communities' – but were described as a complex web of broken, damaged or previously non-existent relationships both within, and between, a range of groupings. The successes in addressing these divisions were predominately portrayed in terms of increasing contact and engagement, with acknowledgement that connections made range from the relatively superficial to the significant and long-term. The new linkages and relationships formed were described in both geographical and sectoral terms, including both formal and tangible structures and arrangements and less tangible, inter-personal connections. Respondents gave credit for these new and complex networks to a range of sources – from the "thriving community and voluntary sector", to individual initiators, to the church structures, and as a result of events which draw communities together, or issues which create common objectives.

Of the many interviewees who identified the web of networks and structures as a significant success,

the majority distinguished the more strategic, often formal, cross-sectoral engagement from the informal networks that tend to emerge through personal contacts. Formal structures established within specific geographical areas were said to have had particular impact and influence. A number made reference to the PEACE Programme's particular emphasis on a partnership-working approach as an effective way to strategically engage stakeholders on a particular issue or concern. As one respondent, working for a service-delivery provider indicated:

It is a harder approach, but will probably reap more benefits in the long run. People have been forced to work together more effectively.

One MLA described his experience of engaging with such funder-established structures:

I sit on the board of [a named regional-focused body]. This has shown a real partnership approach. We are all there to make decisions for the common good. The divisions can be broken down slowly in that way. These partnerships have been very beneficial at times. There have been huge developments both in terms of what decisions are made at the table, but also the connections and relationships that are formed through our mutual engagement.

A key success indicated by a number of respondents was the length and durability of structures and networks which have been maintained and endured, particularly during more challenging periods. As a director of a cross-community organisation stated:

Because our Centre has been around for some time, relationships have been developed over time. So, even when politically things have collapsed, those relationships can be picked up again later.

Conferences, workshops, consultation events and networking opportunities initiated by grantmakers and regional community and public bodies with specific sectoral interests were also identified as important fora for dialogue and interaction. One grantmaker noted: "It is important that greater synergies are felt between projects and we have a responsibility to ensure that happens."

Much success for the establishment of these relationships was credited to the efforts placed at building the *capacity* of individuals and communities to engage. While undefined in many instances, when probed further, interviewees described 'capacity' to mean variously – confidence, trust, self-awareness, capability, having the right skills and ability to understand and articulate the views and positions of a community, and to understand perspectives of others. In particular, a number of respondents referred to the proactive initiatives which have sought to build the capacity of Protestant communities – particularly those in areas they identified as 'loyalist' - and the improvements that they believe have taken place. Several respondents noted that this is particularly observable in interface areas and in relation to issues of bonfires and territorial markings, where "exceptional community leadership" was referenced by one respondent.

One director of a community-based organisation also noted that new opportunities for sharing across traditional divides are opening up in recent years. He noted: "There is now positive examples of good community development work in Catholic areas that can be used in PUL [Protestant, Unionist,

Loyalist] communities, if so desired.” Given the relationships that have already formed in some areas, he believed that one way to transfer this learning was through the inter-faith church structures which now exist.

When questioned on successes to date, the developments which have taken place in relation to former combatant and victims/survivors issues was referenced positively by a number of respondents. Both issues were described as being particularly sensitive and emotive and so progress made at a community-level in terms of service delivery, support mechanisms and campaigning was viewed as particularly noteworthy, given the inherent challenges in this work. Specifically, the scope of collaborative working and relationship building which has taken place within these ‘sectors’ – and to a more limited extent – between the sectors was defined as a relative success. In terms of former political prisoner and combatant groups, relationships between republican and loyalist organisations were variously described as “mature”, “cooperative” and about “recognising equality of citizenship.” The role of some former combatants in demonstrating positive community leadership was also noted by a small number of respondents. In relation to victims and survivors, acknowledgment was given of the work of groups to “help themselves” and “to find a way to deal with what has happened to them positively”. The development of organisations, structures and fora through which the needs of victims and survivors can be articulated and addressed was recognised as a significant achievement over the past decade.

- **Variety and creativity of approaches to addressing attitudes and behaviours**

According to several interviewees, the successes in developing creative, innovative and context-relevant approaches to addressing the challenge of inter-communal division and reconciliation was worthy of note. A number acknowledged that there has been significant financial investment in broadly-defined ‘peace’ focused activities over the past two decades and this has resulted in the development of a range of initiatives which have drawn on international examples of practice as well as home-grown, locally-developed and tailored programmes. References were made to the development of “pilot” programmes which provide the opportunity to develop and refine thinking and practice and offer the evidence for the efficacy of such approaches before further “rolling out”. One respondent, reflecting on the development of a pilot programme to increase inter-communal contact noted:

The pilot helped to allay the concerns about what we were attempting to do, including among political leaders. It is important that they are supportive and provide local endorsement.

Two interviewees spoke of their enthusiasm for new thinking on challenging issues, such as segregated housing and schooling, and welcomed the new initiatives which are being supported to develop different ways of working. Collaborative working across schools and shared schemes in the public housing sector were specifically referenced. In addition, several respondents noted that there was some evidence of more strategic approaches being taken to the “mainstreaming” of good relations issues and approaches into broader social and economic policy development. The financial investment in large flagship projects which provide new physical spaces for communities to mix and avail of a range of services and facilities was also welcomed, albeit tempered by hesitancy about their sustainability in the long-term.

- **Evidence of positive attitudinal change towards the ‘other’**

A growing recognition of the need to address not just the social, economic and physical realities of a deeply divided society, but the attitudes of individuals was noted by several respondents. One interviewee from the community sector felt that “huge advances had been made in tackling sectarianism” although he admitted that “sometimes it is hard to see the benefits of what has been achieved.” His view was that individuals’ attitudes towards ‘the other’ change when shared problems are identified and people work together “to find shared solutions.” A political party representative noted that, in his view, there has been “positive, but patchy success” in addressing the thorny issue of sectarianism. He noted:

There are some successes measured in terms of public attitudes and there are signs that they are changing positively. Attitudes towards sharing with people from other backgrounds is good, as are attitudes towards the idea of mixed marriages. Is that to do with changes in atmosphere rather than intervention? It is hard to tell. It could have something to do with the dispensation. This helps people move away from previous positions. Time will tell, but it is no excuse for not supporting active interventions to address sectarianism at its roots.

Another community-based respondent, working in a predominantly single-identity context, perceives a recent change in attitude within his area of work.

People want something different from the past for their children. People are weary of the conflict and seem more willing to embrace the concept of a shared future.

There was some acknowledgment of attempts to challenge sectarianism within the school system and through curriculum development, although it was felt to have limited impact and to require greater commitment and resourcing if real change can be measured. Interestingly, only two respondents made reference to work achieved in addressing issues of racism, noting that there is “much more activity around ethnic minorities than there once was” and “the equality legislation and focus on hate crimes helps to focus minds on issues other than sectarianism.” Community festivals were noted by one political sector respondent as a means of beginning “tentative engagement between communities”, describing them as being “quick wins” without requiring “pots of money”.

One interviewee specifically noted that the long-term investment in youth-focused services is bearing fruit for the sector as a whole. He noted that there is now a new generation of young people who are acting as “champions” and “supporters” of cross-community work, because “they have come through the process themselves and their attitudes have been shaped by their own experiences.” He noted:

This is one of the major successes, and yet, it is a very slow, generational process of growing the commitment and allowing it to grow. You can see the benefits that have come through the people who have been challenged and changed.

He welcomed the long-term work of the youth sector in addressing issues of sectarianism and racism, while expressing concerns about the current commitment to support and build on the existing experience and expertise in the long-term, an issue which will be returned to later.

Acknowledgment and dealing with the past

Interestingly, few respondents when asked to indicate where they saw successes to date, referenced issues related to 'dealing with the past' or attempts to deal with the legacy of the violent conflict, unless otherwise prompted. These include issues of acknowledgment, justice, truth recovery and memorialisation. That being said, unprompted, one interviewee, based at an urban interface area did observe "an opening up of communication between the local communities on local conflict-related deaths which had taken place" particularly from within the unionist communities, where previously there had been little dialogue. Another respondent, from the grantmaking sector reflected:

The level of discussion and awareness of the issues of the past within the community and voluntary sector has been raised. At least we can now see the knots and where the difficulties are. It has taken us some time to get here. Now we can think about how to unravel them.

As noted previously, a small number of interviewees cited developments in relation to victims' issues, with one citing the increasingly "comprehensive approach to victims and survivors" as a success in recent times. Another noted the publication of the *Consultative Group on the Past* report as a positive development in naming the issues to be addressed, albeit observing that "it appears to have hit a hiatus now." A political sector representative felt that the establishment of the Victims Forum "which represents a very diverse group of people" was an important recent development. She went on to say:

People would not have felt this was possible a few years ago. It works because it is based on respect, equality, commitment to reach an objective and an acceptance that this will mean change for all.

Another political respondent specifically addressed the recent release of the Saville Inquiry report, indicating that this should be seen as a "real moment of reconciliation." He went on to say: "It shows that people in those situations want the truth. In terms of reconciliation in society, it shows that this is achievable when people have the truth."

It is worth acknowledging, however, that when prompted, a significant number of respondents did indicate some progress in 'dealing with the past' in general terms. Several linked this to developments within the victims' sector – and the opening up of a debate around what structures or processes might usefully be adopted to address the legacy of the conflict in a more comprehensive manner. When responding to the second research question on outstanding issues requiring attention, a more significant number raised 'dealing with the past' as an issue requiring additional attention in the future.

Concluding Comments

As noted previously in the methodology section, all interviewees were provided with the five broad research questions that would form the basis of the semi-structured interview in advance. It was interesting to note the sizeable number of respondents who indicated that, in preparing in advance for interview, they found it challenging to frame a response to this first research question on 'successes to date'. While most appeared to have little difficulty in speaking in broad terms - a significant proportion

had difficulty identifying examples of initiatives or approaches which they would wish to see further developed or championed. This does not necessarily imply a belief that examples do not exist; rather that they were not easily recalled, or their impact straightforwardly explained. This may point to a wider question of how initiatives are delivered, how their outcomes are measured and how that impact is articulated and promoted more widely. It may also point to the broader challenge of how good relations work is financed and supported in Northern Ireland – and the tendency for projects to change or disappear with adjustments to grantmakers' priorities or funding availability, leading to a lack of institutional memory. It is also interesting to note that, although the respondents were asked to reflect on successes to date, many quickly began to speak about the outstanding 'good relations' challenges, without further prompting by the interviewer.

Some respondents specifically explained that they had some difficulty in detailing specific examples of good practice or pointing to evidence of positive outcomes beyond projects or initiatives that they had direct involvement with. It was not always clear why this might be the case, although one could speculate as to a number of reasons. These might include lack of time to explore projects in detail, limited access to evaluations that provide detailed analysis of the impact of projects and lack of confidence that their views on the efficacy of projects corresponds with those of others working in the field.

On the basis of the data collected and the subsequent discussion of research findings at the INCORE policy roundtable, it is perhaps worth briefly observing the areas which one might have expected to have been referred to, yet were not. These include little or no reference to the reduction either in visible military presence or in the lack of active engagement of the military in security responses in recent years. Little acknowledgment was made to the financial support provided to support good relations and reconciliation work by the British and Irish governments and the Northern Ireland Executive. No mention was made to the development of North/South and East/West relationships and few references made to specific developments within the victims/survivors sector, particularly in relation to the development of new professional standards and guides to practice. It is also notable that few respondents referred to work with or by minority groups, including 'new' communities, or to positive attempts to develop shared public spaces. A caveat should, of course, be placed on these observations given the restricted number of respondents to the research and the possibility that different interviewees may have identified other issues. However, it is nonetheless an interesting observation which may require further exploration in the future in terms of thinking about how a society understands progress and success to date.

5. Outstanding Issues

The second research question posed of interviewees was: What are the outstanding issues related to the development of a 'shared and better future' that still require attention? As indicated previously, a number of respondents appeared to struggle to identify the areas where they felt there had been demonstrable successes in terms of improving relations in the region beyond the broad macro developments. In contrast, few respondents had difficulty in identifying specific areas where scope existed for improvements in the development of good relations and progression towards reconciliation. That being said, respondents did appear to have some difficulty in expanding in detail on the third research question posed: What are the current economic impacts of segregation and how could these be mitigated into the future? This was the case despite repetition and reframing of the question by the interviewer in order to illicit further detail in many instances. Given the limited focus and reflection on this question by those interviewed, the responses provided have been incorporated into both this section - in terms of current economic impacts - and in the following chapter on priority areas, focusing on practical suggestions for the future.

In general terms, the vast majority of respondents indicated that the outstanding issues which require continued attention, call for it to be *active* and *engaged*. Despite an acknowledgment of the successful outworkings of the 1998 Agreement, all suggested that macro political developments, while of vital importance, are insufficient to address the ongoing divisions within the society. To aid reading, the issues raised have been categorised within related topics or thematic areas, while acknowledging that some issues overlap or are inter-connected in places. Within these categorised sections, the themes raised with more frequency will be addressed in turn. An indication of the frequency of times raised and weight provided to issues is given where possible.

Political Structures and Processes

- **Political vision and leadership**

As outlined previously, many interviewees gave credit to local political leaders for the significant steps taken to work collaboratively to share power in a complex political environment. However, many acknowledge that the system of power-sharing devised remains challenging, with a sizeable number describing the steep learning curve they perceive as still required, in order to ensure the new institutions' smooth and efficient functioning over the long-term. However, by far the most commonly raised issue among respondents was the perceived lack of political vision and leadership around the challenging issue of good relations in Northern Ireland. There was a palpable sense of frustration expressed that significant work remains to develop a clear and agreed vision of the sort of society to be built in Northern Ireland at a leadership level, and an agreed set of goals and objectives to achieve this vision. A sense of urgency was articulated by many respondents, regularly expressing the need for immediate action and the seizing of the opportunity that currently exists for progress. As one respondent put it: "If this is not an historic moment now, when is?"

As noted previously, the external context during the research fieldwork phase is important to bear in mind. A number of the qualitative interviews took place prior to the launch of the *Programme for*

Cohesion, Sharing and Integration consultation document in July 2010, while the majority took place following its release. Therefore, some comments related to the lack of progress in the launch of a new policy framework with inferences of frustration and a sense of stasis at policy development level. Others related to perceived shortcomings of the document, on its release. One political representative interviewed stated his concern:

Simply put, what we have lacked is a vision to work towards. The political leaders have failed to provide the vision to date.

Disappointment was expressed by several that the political leadership or “peacemaker qualities” witnessed during the negotiations of the Agreement, have not subsequently appeared as evident to them. One community and voluntary sector respondent put it thus:

Great efforts were made to get to that point in 1998. That took guts and determination and they should be congratulated for that. But peace does not happen on that day. It requires positive leadership to continue every day afterwards. We are exhausted from looking at them fighting over every policy, because they can’t agree on anything. They fought for this Assembly. Now they need to use it.

A significant number of other respondents expressed similar positions. One, from the public sector, used a metaphor to describe the objective and the task ahead.

It is important to convey a sense of what the outcome might be and a route map for getting there. There is a steep mountain to climb but there has to be some base camps and water holes to get towards. Unless the policy is articulating what the rewards will be from the effort, it is very difficult to get people up the mountain ... They need to clearly state the direction we are going in. State it clearly with conviction. Only then can people’s energy be mustered to set out on the journey.

However, most respondents were clear that it is not simply a matter of articulating the vision or aspiration of what Northern Ireland should become, but that this vision must take on practical form. As one interviewee from the statutory sector put in:

The political leadership needs to be aware that if this just remains an aspiration, then it is endless. What we need is serious infrastructure put in place to make change happen. This requires both political and social goals and a timeline for action. Otherwise, it remains a vague aspiration.

He went on to explain that “Without the symbolic shift, the finances don’t know what they are following. Only when you have the vision can you measure what progress looks like.” Another political representative argued that the creation of the vision is merely the first step. She noted:

It all comes down to the strategy. The only way you know if any policies that are developed are fit-for-purpose is to hold it up against the strategy ... You need to create meaningful short, medium and long-term strategies. It cannot be just about crisis management and dealing with potential hotspots all the time.

A number of respondents highlighted what they felt were the dangers inherent in the lack of vision and leadership around the concept and practice of good relations. A director of a community and voluntary sector organisation asked, rhetorically:

Are we expecting the community and voluntary sector to take care of good relations with no clear demonstration of what a shared future or good relations actually is? This is the context which a lack of political leadership brings ... A lack of leadership gives people an excuse not to do things. There needs to be much more strategic work done to articulate what these concepts mean and how to implement them at a policy level.

Several interviewees indicated that there is a continued need to support the current political leadership to take on the challenge of addressing the divisions in society, while acknowledging that their own political system reflects, replicates and functions through these very cleavages that exist in society. As one interviewee described it:

There is a real weakness in the political system. The predominant mode of politics here is to look at what you have gained at the expense of the other. Achievement is defined as how you have precluded the other from doing something. It is a glass half-full or half-empty situation.

Another respondent expressed a similar concern that the very structures devised by the Agreement militate against the development of a shared vision for the future. He posed a number of rhetorical questions:

How can we expect to develop a coherent debate when we are in a five-party compulsory relationship? What do we do when we recognise the fragmented nature of the government we have? If we acknowledge and recognise it, is there a way forward from there? Or do you have to rewrite the Good Friday Agreement?

He went on to say:

Ultimately, the question lies with the strength of the power-sharing arrangements. Is this the best model or do we have to consider something else, as it holds the seeds of its own downfall? What would happen if we choose to expect fragmentation? Should we just expect incoherence to flow from that? Where might we go from there?

Another interviewee, from within the political structures, indicated that he did not feel there was a “great sense of positive leadership yet.” He went on to say:

We have a polarised political system and a rush to the extremes as politicians become defenders of community interests. The range within the political spectrum has narrowed. There is a mixed outlook for the future, and I believe that fear rather than hope prevails. This type of stronger polarising leadership is being supported through the voting patterns that have now been embedded. My concern is that this may become more acute with this economic downturn.

A number of respondents spoke to what one called the 'immaturity' of the political leadership and the continued need for external pressure to be brought to bear on the local leaders to implement the tough decisions associated with inter-communal divisions, even if they run counter to their own political interests and futures. According to one respondent from the grantmaking sector:

Without external pressure, their capacity to deal with each other is still very fragile. This will be death by paralysis.

Another voluntary sector respondent spoke of his concerns that, given the power-sharing structures are now functioning more successfully, there is less hands-on attention being played to this issue by both the British and Irish governments. He noted that "... there is a sense that the governments have walked off-side too quick and are not fully cognisant of the fact that we are in this critical phase." Another spoke of the need for wider society to hold the political leadership to account. She posed the question: "Does there need to be greater resistance coming from civil society which does not tolerate the indecision and tensions within the Assembly?" One respondent, representing a civil society organisation noted:

We need elected representatives to do the work that they have been elected to do and to demonstrate how politics would work for a whole society. They cannot cop out of decision making at the first sign of tough decisions. This is a sign of weakness. They need to be working for the betterment of the whole society and look beyond party and constituency. Who is looking at how politics can become more civil?

There was, however, acknowledgement from several respondents that there has been a maturing of relationships at Assembly level, and that this will ultimately lead to a greater level of policy development and decision-making in the months and years to come. A respondent from the political sector put it thus:

The challenge over the past few years has been in getting to know each other and in learning to negotiate on key issues. The next phase is to develop areas for negotiation and political maturity. We need to take initiatives and explain them. Then people will accept them. It is about showing positive leadership.

A leader from the statutory sector believes that the local political context will continue to change, and that change should be accepted and welcomed. She reflects:

Politics will evolve, as will the power-sharing arrangements. They have to. Otherwise, we will be left with stasis. We cannot continue in a situation where the parties have to agree to everything – that's not how politics works.

○ **Capacity of Political Leadership**

In addressing the issue of political competency and maturation of the locally elected representatives - many of whom have been afforded significant decision-making responsibilities with the devolution

of power - several respondents raised the issue of individual capacity. One community and voluntary sector leader asked:

How do we start getting elected representatives to work together and take brave decisions that they are happy to stand by, and stand together, publicly? This is a serious question that requires intervention, I think.

Another, from the political sector, felt that some local politicians might benefit from the types of political training offered by US institutions and others – and that with exposure to other political systems and ways of working internationally, a greater understanding and confidence might be gained. Another identified an outstanding need to build the capacity of local political leaders in order to engage more productively with colleagues across the whole political spectrum.

There is still work to be done with political leaders on relationship building and addressing their own prejudices. Some people have mellowed by engagement in Assembly. But it is not enough, because it is just within the context of a working environment. There is very little interaction to debate and discuss issues. It would be useful to have more opportunities for safe, political dialogue which is not about point scoring and more about improving understanding. I don't think there is enough of this, and it shows.

A specific concern expressed by two different respondents was the lack of a voice for the loyalist communities within the broader unionist political bloc. One community sector respondent expanded:

There is a disconnection between mainstream unionism and loyalism. They don't seem to be given support. There needs to be a better relationship formed, because the working class areas are being let down and do not have political leadership. Loyalism has been scapegoated. Mainstream politicians have absolved themselves from the conflict. This has led to a great deal of disgruntlement. We need to impress upon the Unionist politicians the need to engage with the grassroots. People are not voting at all in these areas. They need to deliver.

It was not only at devolved Assembly level that several respondents felt that politics was hindering progress towards improved relations and reconciliation. While, as previously noted, a number of respondents felt that improvements had been made at local government level, this progress was described as "patchy" and of "varying standards". Disappointment was expressed that the opportunities which they felt might come from the Review of Public Administration and the rationalisation of local councils to improve relationships between political parties, had been lost. The continued need to resource councillors and officials to support local good relations work was also noted, while recognising that not everything can be resolved at council level and many issues require macro political leadership.

- **Policy making and policy implementation**

Directly related to political leadership and vision, all of those interviewed, to one extent or another,

raised the issue of macro policy developments, or lack thereof. While many of the respondents framed their views in relation to the *CSI* document, and its *Shared Future* predecessor, others spoke in broader terms about the range of policy areas where they felt outstanding decisions remained to be taken. A palpable sense of urgency to experience coherent policy development and implementation was expressed by many interviewees. As one respondent from the political sector put it:

It is time, at a policy level, to deliver. To manage sectarianism is both morally and economically wrong. Devolution has helped to focus our minds. Now it is time to do the work.

Many questioned spoke in ambitious terms of what they envisaged for policy development in the coming years. One described the large-scale changes he was hoping for:

The scale of change required in policy terms is akin to the Patten reform of policing. There is a need to get out of the shared and better future's notion and deal with the present realities of policy inertia on the hard-to-tackle issues.

In terms of existing and future policies, several interviewees spoke of the need for some form of 'good relations proofing' to take place at individual departmental level. This, one respondent argued, would ensure that policies that do not, at first glance, appear to have any direct impact on good relations would be considered in more detail, and any negative impacts considered and taken into account. While it was recognised by some that all policies are required to complete Equality Impact Assessment (under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, 1998), a small number of respondents indicated that it would be useful if greater emphasis were placed on the good relations impacts. In addressing the current arrangements related to Section 75 obligations, it was apparent from the interviews undertaken that various interpretations of the Section 75(1) and 75(2) duties currently exist and that no consensus has formed around the most effective approach to be taken to support change and address equality and good relations priorities. While different perspectives on the approaches to be pursued have been long-held, it appears that the recent public, chamber and community debates on the development of an Assembly-led policy framework for good relations has served to highlight the differing positions of the political parties, community relations practitioners and others. A number of interviewees expressed frustration at the lack of agreement among the political leadership as to the best approach to ensure good relations. This lack of consensus, they noted, has been reflected in the quantity and quality of policy developments in the past number of years. This was described as a complex debate between the intersection of equality, fairness and good relations imperatives and the relative emphases that should be placed on each, and to what end.

A level of confusion about the relative positions of the various political parties on this issue was also expressed by those outside the political sector. One community-based respondent indicated that, prior to the development of a shared vision for the future of Northern Ireland: "We have to have a thorough debate and to talk through the concepts." In the absence of this, the political leadership are struggling to present a "united front" in terms of policy development and implementation. Several respondents indicated that real change in good relations will be effected through a focus on outstanding socio-economic issues, with communities working to address common concerns on either single or cross-community bases. One respondent from the political sector noted:

If people can see the commonalities in their experiences, emerging from that is so much potential ... So much money has been spent on community relations over the years. It is important for people to share in a natural way. All of that comes out of energy and enthusiasm and with equality of purpose between the individuals involved. If they speak with a common voice, a lot more can be achieved.

Another noted that many communities have a collective sense of low-esteem and that the physical dereliction within communities is one important aspect to be addressed. She noted: "Positive changes in physical infrastructure can make a difference. People have to be able to see the change." She went on to explain that there appears to be a "disjoint" between the three key areas of "the economy, social development and safety, sustainability and justice" and argues that all areas are interlinked and all require attention.

You cannot make people just feel better about living in poverty. It is not enough to deal with the symptoms of the issues. You must tackle the causes, and that includes inequality.

The commentary from respondents consistently returned to the varying interpretations of good relations and equality which have developed over time. One respondent from the statutory sector noted:

The notion that these two issues are in conflict is nonsensical. I can understand the train of thought but it is not true that in dealing with good relations, you put the focus on that instead of equality. This position misses several points related to Section 75. They are not either/or. All Section 75 says is that you cannot set aside equality duty for good relations duty. They should be viewed as mutually inter-dependent and inter-penetrating. Without both, neither will realise the full potential on its own. The one will not endanger the other. There is a lot of dialectic wasted on that argument.

A respondent from the grantmaking sector observed that "There appears to be a feeling that everything can be solved through economic drivers, and it cannot." Another, from the same sector noted: "It is not only about managing segregation. We know there is a link between poverty and violence but the position taken by some is too simplistic." Another political sector representative noted:

There are dangers inherent in taking an equality approach based on objective need. Good relations appear as an afterthought in this. We are in danger of focusing exclusively on deprivation – and we do not believe there is necessarily a correlation between good relations and deprivation.

Another added:

There is a perception that it's those in disadvantaged areas that are the most sectarian. This is not an exclusive problem to the most deprived areas. I don't think society as a whole has been challenged in terms of their sectarianism.

A political sector respondent expressed concern that the "PUL community are very reluctant to engage

with the equality and human rights debates, and so they get left out at times.” They also indicated that this work requires heightening of awareness among officials of the societal and financial value of such an exercise. One put it thus: “It is vital that civil servants get the concept of good relations. For a long time, they did not see their role in it.” However, as one respondent noted:

The challenge is for it not to become another tick-box exercise ... Good relations needs to be mainstreamed into statutory responsibilities beyond the limited equality agenda. It needs to be delivered in a real, not bureaucratic, way.

In order to make this an effective exercise, it was noted by three separate interviewees that the practical capacity of civil servants to undertake such proofing would have to be built. One noted that this would require that they become “sensitised” to the concept of good relations and “how to work with these in meaningful ways.” The current system, whereby good relations activities are monitored and collated by the OFMdfM, was criticised as being “dysfunctional” and “top-heavy and unwieldy”, with “no sense of direction to them.” What is required, one respondent noted, is “a shift in mindset.” Optimism was expressed by one government official that change was possible and that, in his experience, civil servants “are open to change, not just as civil servants, but also as local citizens, with a personal interest in positive improvements to this place we all live in.” A community sector respondent noted that any policy initiatives formulated will have to involve “the people.” She went on to say:

It is no good if it is only operated by government departments. You need the people’s engagement if it is to be effective. We need to find ways of integrating what has been done on the ground into this process of policy formation. And that means taking risks and the willingness to take risks.

Another voluntary sector director argued that the overall policy direction should be “driven from within the community and voluntary sector, but with government support.” In contrast, a funding sector interviewee, while acknowledging the importance of the grantmakers having some say in policy direction, indicated that:

Whatever is agreed, it needs to be implementable within government departments. There needs to be a strong Ministerial Panel created and the structures need to be dynamic and policy driven.

The issue of inter-departmental cooperation within the current political dispensation will be further expanded upon below.

○ **Cross-Departmental Policy Development**

Concern was expressed by a respondent from the grantmaking sector that the power-sharing arrangements which established the Northern Ireland Assembly are, ironically, a significant stumbling block to more effective policy making on good relations issues. He asked:

Could it be the case that the legacy of the arrangements is now coming home to roost? The constructive ambiguity which brought the arrangements into being is now much more of a problem than was first envisaged. The difficulty with the arrangements is that there is now

little or no incentive to trade or deal make. Each department is seen to be its own fiefdom. They move it towards back-to-back carve ups, rather than collaboration.

He went on to say that, in his view, the strategic 'home' for good relations work within the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMdFM) is not working effectively and that "there is no central strategic behaviour." He said: "It is a case of decision-making by track changes." Two other respondents used the term "siloed" to describe the work of individual departments, with another putting this down to "a lack of confidence and trust" between members of the Executive. One political respondent expressed concerns that policy developments in this field should be led through the OFMdFM, as the evidence to date is that some policy proposals have lacked broader Executive ownership or endorsement.

It was unsurprising that much of the discussion on political policy responses would be viewed through the prism of the CSI document which was released for public consultation during the course of the data collection phase. Interviews held before the release of the document tended to reflect on what they hoped to see contained in the document. This included an expectation of a clear political vision, strategic priorities in key social areas and a robust tool for meaningful progress being made. One respondent said:

What I hope to see in it is clear lines of accountability. Without departmental responsibility and guidance, the work cannot take place. Regardless of what an individual department's policy is, and how it is influenced by the Minister's own party position, the CSI strategy needs to move this work forward. There needs to be joined-up policy making. But, it has to be about making the policies work in practice and for people to work effectively within the roles they serve.

Following the document's launch, opinions on its content varied considerably. From the political sector respondents, one noted that in his view, the document had been successful in presenting an "overarching strategic commitment" and that it still required "a great detail in terms of actions and outworking, which will come from the individual departments and their cross-departmental working." Others expressed frustration, calling the document both "horrendous for all those who have worked on this for years" and a "huge disappointment and a dangerous document." However, one who had expressed negative views did conclude that it did "change the narrative. It provides a space to discuss a vision. It is important to have the debate. Nothing is lost." Another political sector respondent noted:

It's all very well having the strategic aim. But we need to see the targeted resources. The vision should inform all of the activities. This cannot be just an OFMdFM strategy – it requires planning and infrastructure. It should inform every government policy and legislation. It is also about value-for-money.

From the statutory sector, one respondent appeared to agree with this assessment. He stated that: "The real weakness of the document is that it is insufficiently ambitious and aspirational. There is no operationalisation of the vision." He went on to highlight what he saw as the deficiencies in the document itself:

It underestimates the scale of the task. It needs a much clearer vision of how a society should be. It is important not to pretend that this is going to be easy. It *is* difficult. The document didn't identify the scale of the task, or the real benefits that could come from improved relations.

It is important to note that a substantial consultation exercise was conducted following the release of the CSJ consultation document, including public events on both geographical and sectoral basis. In addition, individuals and organisations submitted written responses and an independent consultancy were retained to provide an analysis of submissions received.

Safety and Security

Immediate and longer term threats to gains made by the peace process and the establishment of the new institutional arrangements were raised by a significant number of respondents. While some merely listed "the dissident threat" among their catalogue of outstanding issues identified, a proportion went into greater detail, outlining their views on the dangers posed by groups opposing the current political arrangements continuing to support the use of violence.

There were mixed views from respondents as to the level of risk currently posed by the existence of 'dissident' groups, particularly from republican backgrounds. A respondent, working within a community setting, did not believe these groups "had any political arguments" and another, that they have "no interest in the political context." Another, from the same sector indicated that such groupings were "not significant", that they are "micro-groups". He felt that "the issue has been overblown" and "the threat is not that great." However, another was concerned that the strategy of these groups is to "wind the situation up and to provoke tit-for-tat reaction." He indicated that "there needs to be more than ritual condemnation of dissidents" and suggests the establishment of a "task force which looks at the leading dissidents and tracks them." The issue of provocation was raised by a number of respondents, who expressed concerns that, with an increase in scale and severity of action by such groups, members of the loyalist community may "react". A community-based respondent described this reaction as "inevitable". Of those who raised the issue, the majority indicated that it would be important to keep lines of communication open with the membership of dissident groups, where possible. Another community-based respondent indicated:

People should not be squeezed out because they do not agree with the settlement. There is more and more disillusionment on the streets. We need to engage people, not blame them.

Another said: "They should be engaged, rather than frozen out." A statutory sector respondent expressed some concern that, while she felt that the security threat was being taken seriously by the PSNI, that it was not on the agenda of the various government departments at all.

Several respondents also made a connection between dissident republican groups and young people, indicating that the picture is more complex than at first sight. It was noted by several that young people are attracted to anti-social behaviour and rioting, not for political motives, but variously because they feel "disenfranchised", "dislocated" or "bored". However, others noted that this analysis was overly simplistic and did not account for the "confusion" felt by young people in relation to the

conflict, their understanding of it, the impact of violence on power dynamics within communities and how social standing is both gained and maintained within some communities. A few respondents highlighted the importance of making the link between the economy and disenfranchised youth. In sum, they noted that young people should not be demonised; rather their underlying issues and needs should be acknowledged and addressed. A respondent from the grantmaking sector indicated that one of the most significant issues which remain outstanding for her is how to ensure that young people do not become attracted to, or engaged with, paramilitary activities. She asked: “How do we stop them walking into this?” Concerns were expressed by two interviewees that the “standing” which former combatants previously held within some communities has weakened, resulting in a reduction in control and influence over the actions of young people, in particular.

The additional security threat related to the on-going tensions between loyalist paramilitary groupings was identified by a number of community-based respondents, working within the Protestant community or in interface contexts. One described this as a “vacuum of community leadership” and a “festering sore” within one neighbourhood, which requires active attention. More broadly, political representation for loyalist communities was viewed by a small number of respondents as “weak” or “absent”, with one expressing concern that this “dearth of leadership could be filled by paramilitaries.”

Social and Economic Levers of Change

○ Addressing socio-economic disadvantage and differentials

Following on from calls for the development of a political vision, the practical outworkings of the vision in terms of social and economic drivers of change were discussed as outstanding issues requiring attention. The ways in which people live, learn, work, socialise and interact were identified as key mechanisms through which good relations could be developed and reconciliation achieved. It was apparent from the responses given that concepts such as ‘good relations’ and ‘reconciliation’ are not understood simply as personal, inter-personal or inter-communal activities which can be achieved through facilitated, contact-type ‘projects’ or ‘interventions’. All interviewees referenced key social and economic mechanisms that require significant structural or institutional changes, if abstract vision is to take on practical application. One respondent, representing a political party, argued that:

[T]he traditional view of community relations as contact theory is important – but limited. The large policy levers, such as housing, education and socio-economic development must be examined if real impact is to be made on the deep divisions within the society.

A common thread of the language of ‘sharing’ underpinned much of the discourse during the research, perhaps unsurprisingly, given its increasing prominence in policymaking and grantmaking sectors in recent years. One respondent, working within the statutory sector put it thus:

We have had strategies for separating for many years in Northern Ireland. We now need to develop strategies for sharing. There is no real imagination going into the work of bringing people together. This needs dramatic intervention for any real difference to be felt.

The research did not uncover any disagreement among respondents on the broad need to support and encourage socio-economic development for the region. All respondents viewed it as a fundamental priority for its future success - even more so during these times of economic recession. As noted previously, however, there was an apparent divergence of views as to the relationship between socio-economic development, good relations and equality. Some respondents viewed improvements in the socio-economic context of individuals and communities as a fundamental building-block on which good relations may subsequently flow and flourish. Others indicated that it is the particular and deliberate design of socio-economic changes that more directly influences the qualities of relationships formed, and actively reduces instances of sectarianism, racism and prejudiced attitudes towards individuals and groups.

One community and voluntary sector respondent, based in an area of high deprivation, viewed the targeting of socio-economic issues as fundamental to their work on 'good relations'. He explained:

Social justice has to be the priority. I have come to realise the importance of social justice in community relations work. This goes beyond peace and reconciliation. Social justice is about taking a holistic approach. So, it is as much about the pre-school care as it is about a support group meeting for addicts. It is all about developing communities with dignity.

A respondent from the grantmaking sector noted:

The levels of social deprivation that we have seen in working class areas are frightening. There are identifiable pockets that require work. We need to take proactive measures to reach out to these communities as they are not engaging in the same way as other communities. How do you help to rehabilitate these communities? We need to be asking ourselves: How can we help those communities to empower themselves?

The significant levels of unemployment experienced in both geographical and sectoral areas were highlighted as a barrier to the encouragement of contact. A community-based respondent noted that, for him, the training that is provided to the long-term unemployed is not always appropriate or targeted.

Training has not worked the way it should. We have people who are serial trainees. The community-based qualifications they have received are not well respected. It has raised people's expectations and this is not matched by opportunities.

A community and voluntary sector director, working in disadvantaged communities acknowledges, the complexity of issues to be addressed if the differentials between communities are to be addressed. He notes:

We need to work on confidence, employment, educational achievement and opportunities for communities to get to know each other and negotiate territory. Really the practical things.

Others spoke of the need to take a holistic, multi-agency approach to the challenge of addressing socio-economic disadvantage, engaging with a broad range of sectors, including the private business

sector, who appreciate the direct link between an increasingly stable, prosperous and peaceful society and the development of a healthy, broad-based economy. The majority of respondents referenced the multi-faceted aspects of socio-economic development, which traverse a range of key areas of social policy, including housing, education and training, and service delivery, addressed in turn below.

- **Residential segregation**

The issue of housing - both social and private - and residential segregation was a focus for comment by a significant number, although by no means all, respondents. The key message emerging was that, if the desegregation of society is a policy objective, then where people choose to live – or the policies by which people are allocated housing – is an issue which requires active intervention. Housing choices and housing allocation was identified as a key social driver to the development of increased ‘sharing’ in the society. That being said, not all respondents advocated an interventionist approach to addressing existing divisions within residential accommodation, with a small number arguing that where people decide to live is a personal choice and should not be enforced through policy changes. As one community sector respondent put it:

Social engineering will not cure these problems. It depends on how you look at what the problems actually are. It is not the problem of the communities between each other. By engineering integration it is indicating that you believe the problem in Northern Ireland was internal – and this is not the case.

The very high instances of segregated living, both among social and privately-owned or rented housing was identified by a number of respondents as a key barrier to improving relations. However, it was acknowledged that this was the product of a range of complex factors, including historical patterns, displacement during the conflict, and patterns of fear and mistrust, among others. As one respondent noted:

People are choosing where they live based on where they feel most comfortable. That is normal. But where does that leave society as a whole?

Segregated social housing was referenced by some respondents as both an outstanding issue to be addressed, but also a key prospect for policy intervention, if the political will for change exists. The large public housing providers came in for criticism for their previous housing allocation policies, which was noted by one as having “entrenched segregated living in the past” and by another as having “ducked issues by managing, rather than addressing the consequences of the conflict.” A significant number of respondents felt that the current housing allocation policies should be examined to identify further opportunities to encourage sharing. That being said, many recognised that changes may be restricted by the current responsibilities embedded in equality legislation. Some ambiguity was evident among respondents as to the current levels of both political and public support for the development of shared housing policies. Again, reference was made to the Patten reforms in policing, with one respondent proposing that “there needs to be a Patten for housing. We need outside thinking and different rules.” But, he asked, rhetorically: “Is there the political will to do this?”

There was acknowledgement of the work which has been carried out to date in piloting shared neighbourhoods by the Housing Executive in collaboration with external funding partners and the Department for Social Development, and a welcome of the promising results of the mid-term evaluation of the programme. While these initiatives were broadly supported, the question was again raised as to the levels of political support for these programmes and the extent to which they can make significant inroads into the development of shared housing, in the absence of a wholly conducive legislative and policy environment, adequate resourcing and cross-departmental cooperation. One political representative questioned “how much inroads have really been made to date?” His concern was that these projects are “merely scratching the surface” and it is much easier with new, rather than existing housing stock. He reflected that, given the prevailing economic context, it is unlikely that the current patterns of segregation within existing housing stock will change without fundamental mind-shifts in individuals’ personal choices and social patterns. His view was that sharing - particularly in private housing - is occurring, but only “...by default ... by people being private about their identity and living virtually anonymously.” Another noted that, in developing new policies: “We should ensure that we place great importance of maintaining the shared neighbourhoods that we have and not become complacent about that either.”

It was recognised by other respondents that changes to current levels of residential separation are not solely a policy decision. It requires the support of the home owner or tenant to make any significant change. As one interviewee noted:

The politicians have a different set of priorities to the community. It is vital that you gauge the temperature of the communities themselves. The political classes may think quite differently to them.

One community sector coordinator, working in a predominantly single-identity neighbourhood, asked:

How do you make this a place where people would want to live? How do you get residents to recognise the need to change? A lot of the problem with the estate has to do with perceptions. The removal of the manifestations of sectarianism has been important for us. It now feels like a place that other people, not from our background, would want to live.

It was acknowledged, however, that fears do exist, particularly within public housing tenants, that there will be attempts to force integration as a policy imperative and that this should be avoided. However, it was noted by several respondents that, given an appropriate and staged approach, political support and a conducive policy environment, a strong community commitment and infrastructure and a housing stock that is “practicable, desirable and safe,” greater progress is possible.

- **Education and youth provision**

The challenge of working with those who make up a significant proportion of the overall population of the region – children and young people – was raised by all but one respondent, underlying the importance placed on the relationship between good relations, broadly understood, and young people. An analysis of the responses provided indicate that the vast majority of those interviewed did not feel that sufficient attention, resources or political priority has been given to working with young

people to address the myriad impacts of the conflict and inter-communal divisions within both the formal and informal educational and developmental sectors.

Various, when asked to identify the outstanding good relations issues requiring attention, respondents replied: “the future of young people has to be a priority” and “Young people have got to be a priority. Making stuff happen on the ground.” It was recognised by a majority that working with young people is challenging, complex and multi-level. From an analysis of the responses provided, four key threads to this discussion were identified, which will be addressed in turn. Firstly, a key focus was on the opportunities and challenges facing the formal education system in terms of current levels and types of mixing between students from different religious and cultural backgrounds, and the impact of the predominately segregated education system. Secondly, respondents noted the broad range of challenges facing young people as a consequence of the social and economic context in which they are growing up, the segregated nature of the society and the legacy of the conflict itself. Thirdly, a number of respondents focused on the role of the non-formal youth sector and the provisions which are available, both through public sector and community-based avenues. Fourthly, a thread of discussion focused on the approaches and methodologies used in working with young people and outstanding issues emerging in relation to this.

- *Formal education sector*

The majority of those who made reference to the formal education sector, focused on primary and post-primary education (rather than further and higher education), and specifically the segregated nature of current schooling arrangements. When asked to identify outstanding good relations issues, many indicated that a commitment to the development of more integrated schools through explicit policy directives was required if any substantive changes to the current contact arrangements between students from different backgrounds was to occur. Interestingly, while the majority of respondents raised the integration of education on their list of outstanding issues, most did not extrapolate further, as if to imply that the benefits of such a change were clearly apparent. It was noted by several respondents that the main financial support for the promotion of integrated education has come from external grantmakers and that there was no clear direction provided by the local political parties in terms of further commitments to support developments in this area. A respondent noted that “this external funding will always have an artificial cap on what it can do in the absence of clear policy.” One political representative acknowledged that this issue “has not moved forward in the past number of years.” He noted:

There is a real reluctance on government to implement their duty to promote integrated education. There is a defensiveness to protect what we have. This is viewed as a threat to survival in a number of quarters.

Another respondent from the voluntary sector welcomed the new initiatives which explore collaborative working arrangements between schools. This was noted as a “more creative way of addressing these issues, if the appetite does not exist for integrated education just yet.” Another political respondent noted that the various church groups need to be further, and more deeply, engaged in the discussions around integrated education and the role they can play in fostering better relations across a new generation of young people.

Several respondents also identified an outstanding need to develop robust ‘community relations’ training within the formal education sector as a whole and its further embedding in the overall curriculum at primary and post-primary levels. While there was acknowledgement that training programmes have been developed for teachers and pupils, concerns were expressed that the budgets for community relations work in schools have been cut and that schools will not prioritise such work, within or between schools, in the absence of sufficient resources. It was noted that, through external funding support, programmes have been developed, but they require direct government funding if they are to be sustained and embedded in the long-term. One statutory sector respondent noted:

How do you talk about the conflict in the classroom if the teachers do not feel equipped or confident enough to do it? They are concerned that they will not have any institutional support, if it doesn’t go well. This needs to be placed firmly in the policy arena, so teachers know they are being supported to do this hard work.

Several respondents indicated that greater training for teachers to address these sensitive issues and embedded curriculum development is required. Relevant subject areas mentioned were citizenship, history and pastoral care.

In addition, a small number suggested that teaching professionals need to be provided with the training and skills necessary to deal with sectarianism and racism which manifests itself, both within, and outside, the classroom. They indicated that there is an opportunity to address the insidious nature of prejudice through work with young people in the formal education sector, but that this requires specific skills, training and sensitivity to be delivered with confidence. This was variously described as an outstanding challenge to be addressed in terms of both policy development and financial support structures. One respondent, working in the youth sector noted:

Training is a priority. It needs to be linked well with universities. In both formal and informal education sectors, it is necessary that this type of training is seen as a specialist piece of work. All teachers and youth workers ask is how we can implement this. There needs to be both drivers who are committed to this work and a direction of travel that comes from the political leadership, to ensure change will occur.

A voluntary sector respondent expressed concerns that, with reductions in community relations funding to the youth and community sector, greater responsibility will “inevitably” be placed on teachers to address issues of sectarianism and racism in the classroom. While acknowledging that some work is taking place with the teacher training colleges, one respondent noted that “it is still very limited.” He noted that this work does not only require training, but its implementation and impacts require careful monitoring. He noted:

There is a significant need for external challenge in relation to the schools delivery. It is important to encourage schools to ensure there is challenge to the existing culture. It requires them to draw on external mentors and to maintain change.

One statutory sector respondent agreed that curriculum development and practical training skills are “very valuable” and that “research has highlighted that sectarianism and racism can be avoided, with

intervention.” However, he noted that this is not an issue that can be restricted to the classroom or youth centre. “The roots of this problem lie in the communities. Leadership comes from there. The impact is going to be limited unless you engage with parents and the community as a whole.”

- *Challenges facing young people*

During the course of the interviews, respondents noted a variety of challenges facing young people in Northern Ireland, linking their experience and views of the conflict to the development of good relations in this new generation. In some instances, they went on to propose ways in which these challenges can be addressed, which will be detailed later in the report.

The first challenge - linked to current formal education provision - was the lack of contact, interaction or engagement which young people have with those from other backgrounds, religions, races and neighbourhoods. A number indicated their deep concern that a significant number of young people have no interaction whatsoever with people from other communities, their lives being described variously as “insular”, “homogeneous” and “narrow in vision”. Several expressed particular concern for those young people living in more deprived areas, with one making specific reference to “young working-class boys” who have “lost a form of socialisation due to their lack of mobility.” It was noted that many young people experience fear and mistrust of other communities and “their views need to be challenged and opened up.” Another youth sector respondent noted that:

The young people do not see good relations as a top priority because they are living within their own neighbourhoods and do not have to mix with others. They do not want cross-community contact. They don’t see what is in it for them.

Secondly, several respondents described what they saw as the confusion of young people about how they should relate to the conflict and what it means to them, as a new “post-ceasefires’ generation”, as one described it. A number indicated that, in their view or experience, young people feel very alienated from the peace process and yet, at the same time, their lack of experience as to the disruptive effects of the conflict-related violence has led to a growing romanticism of what the conflict was about and how it should be understood or interpreted. One respondent from the grantmaking sector reflected:

People have never sought to explain the conflict to young people and, as a result, they don’t always see the benefit of peace within their own communities. We need to be able to explain the process of how we got to where we are to young people, so that they have a greater understanding of where we have come from, and where we are going. The Good Friday Agreement needs to be articulated to young people. We need to address the psychological aspects of the impact of the conflict. These issues will not go away. The unrest and disaffection being felt among young people seems to have taken us by surprise. Who would have thought, 12 years ago, that we would have a new generation who feel so connected to the conflict, and yet did not live through the most violent years?

A statutory sector respondent also reflected on the confusion felt by young people:

Why are these children confused? It is precisely because they don't know anything of the past. They see it as heroic. They have no recollection of it. So, should we teach the children then? There is no agreed history – nor can there ever be. This is too deep-seated and disruptive to be able to articulate clearly. If you don't show the gore, you sanitise it. I am not sure how you do it. But I do know that you don't need an agreed history to present the outcomes of conflict. There should be no disagreement about the reality of violence. On that we should, as adults, be able to provide a clear message.

A respondent from the youth sector acknowledges that this has been a difficult time for those who work with young people.

There has been confusion during the peace process phase. People thought there was peace and that violence did not play the same role. Workers were not sure what to do. Young people are now used to living in their own neighbourhoods. It is only when they go outside that they realise they are not necessarily safe. This is an adult responsibility. The onus should not be on the young people to understand this and to make sense of it. Young people need role modelling to make sense of the changes that have taken place. At the moment, they are feeling very alienated from the peace process.

As previously mentioned, several respondents expressed concern that the confusion and dislocation that young people are feeling in relation to the conflict increases their possibility of being drawn into paramilitary activity or engagement in other forms of anti-social behaviour. One community sector respondent noted: "Young people need boundaries, not paramilitaries. These positive boundaries are not being demonstrated to them."

Several respondents also noted that educational under-attainment is a significant issue which requires additional focus and attention. One community-based respondent's view was that education has wider repercussions beyond the obvious academic achievements:

If people are educated better, they are not as easily manipulated. They can see that they cannot blame the other for all their ills. They have a more sophisticated understanding of their own, and other's lives.

A number of respondents made similar points, raising the issue of youth unemployment. This growing concern was identified not only as an economic issue, but one which impacts significantly on the social fabric of society, including the development of "greater tolerance of others", "sharing" and "community cohesion". Several noted that greater emphasis should be placed on skills development and on ensuring that young people are equipped to maximise the benefits of opportunities which may become locally available.

- *The statutory and non-statutory youth sector*

A third thematic area raised by respondents related to both the statutory and non-statutory youth sectors and the issues they continue to face. An overarching concern expressed related to the challenge of the youth sector to address and balance the diverse issues facing young people and

where the good relations and reconciliation work fits within the wider picture. As one youth sector respondent put it: “It is difficult to fight for one area of work when there are so many priorities.” She went on to say:

In terms of CR in youth work, there are so many agenda items being placed on youth workers’ shoulders. Health, education, drugs, suicide, participation, inclusion, to name a few. CR has not had the same emphasis in recent years. A lot of action is dependent on what a funder wants and you have to work on that issue. If the drive is on one particular issue such as suicide, that is where the attention is drawn. It’s a constant balancing act.

Another respondent echoed the same point: “Community relations is being left behind within the youth sector as there are so many competing focuses, including LGBT issues, travellers and language issues.” It is, perhaps interesting to note that these issues were framed by respondents as community relations issues, but distinct and separate challenges to address.

It was noted that funding for the youth sector comes through a variety of avenues, including the Department of Education, but also from a range of other internal and external sources. An analysis of the responses provided by interviewees suggest that this cocktail of funding sources brings challenges for the sector as a whole and youth workers in particular, as each source has its own priorities, objectives and timeframes. One noted that a “culture of short term funding to the youth sector is having a significant effect on the quality and duration of youth-focused initiatives being implemented.” The delays in the development of a new policy for community relations work within the Department of Education was also raised by several respondents. One respondent noted:

Northern Ireland is in unstable times. That is the context in which youth work is taking place. A lot of decisions are being made within this background. There are changes to policies being made, but not changes in public money. If anything, there are cuts in public money at the time when more resources are vital. The true impact of potential funding cuts has not yet been felt to its full extent.

Another noted: “In the review undertaken by the Department of Education, it was decided that the core groups which are currently funded needed to be rationalised. In this context, this has ended up with cuts across the board. This is not strategic thinking.” Another expressed the view that the “culture of short-term funding” is having a detrimental effect on the development of long-term strategies. In particular, she was critical of the funding of “pilot schemes without effective rolling out”, noting that this is “counter-productive”. Making a general point about funding to the youth sector, another respondent noted:

There appears to be a lack of risk taking ... a risk avoidance culture is increasing. You have to be creative as a funder to take calculated risks. Sometimes it doesn’t work out. If it is too outcome driven, there can be a risk of avoidance.

Specific mention was made by several respondents to the funding available to the community and voluntary sector for youth-targeted and youth-related programming. In this context, good relations work was described as being somewhat “additional” and that organisations and groups were attempting to plug funding gaps in the provision of services by applying for ‘community relations’

focused grants. Concern was raised that, in some instances, these organisations had undertaken little strategic planning or training to address community relations issues, and so the funding was not being utilised to its full intention or purpose. A voluntary sector respondent noted that in his target area, significant duplication of services was evident, due to the geographical prioritisation of work by numerous funders. This was resulting in an uncoordinated approach and poor utilisation of resources for young people in his view. It was noted by another respondent that youth organisations are struggling to address the myriad of demands placed on their services by the various grant providers. She noted:

Youth workers have targets to meet and it changes how they do their work. It is important to focus on the young people's needs, not the organisational or funders needs. The structural part of youth work needs to be resourced. For young people these are very unstable times because it feels like the very foundations of this work are not secure.

It was recognised that significant effort had been made to embed a coherent strategy for youth work through the JEDI (Joined in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence) partnership process. This process was viewed, by the two respondents who referenced it, as having a "focus on inclusion and being more holistic" and "on real institutional change." It was also described as being "a very coherent strategy for youth work" which is now "fragmented because of the four boards, with little real communication between the staff of each board." It was noted by another respondent that the legacy of the JEDI process "lives on within the organisations involved" and was "a good investment at the time". However, he noted that in light of new policy developments, this work now requires review, yet that process was viewed as being "painful", given the "huge amount of energy already invested in rolling it out." The sense that significant change has occurred within the youth sector was referenced by three respondents. One noted:

Senior youth workers' roles have completely changed in the last few years. There is a focus on participation and structures, but often the many issues that require attention get lost. Community relations should not get lost in the bureaucracy. It needs to be driven as a top priority.

Concern was also expressed that cuts in funding resources are resulting in a loss of personnel from within the voluntary youth organisations, and that some of this loss could be mitigated by increased partnership working between statutory and voluntary sectors in the delivery of services to children and young people.

In policy development terms, there was a real sense from respondents that the structures and processes of working are in significant flux at present. One respondent noted:

I am really frustrated. The Department of Education is now calling all the shots and they see the youth work role as educational. They see the youth sector as their resource to use to support this. The targets are now all about academic achievement. This has big implications for youth work. No one understands where youth work is going. The Youth Service is feeling totally disempowered.

Another expressed frustration at the lack of apparent progress:

It seems that due to pressure and elections and non-decision making, we are now in a void. Project contracts are due to end. The review took place two years ago but there has been no conclusion or clear direction to date.

A political representative put it starkly: “This lack of political will to develop a coherent strategy is restricting young people’s opportunities.”

- *Methodology and approaches*

The final thematic issue which emerged from the discussions was a focus on the approaches and methodologies adopted to address good relations among young people. The majority of respondents who referenced this area spoke in positive terms about the quality, creativity and impact of current youth-focused initiatives and the need for these to be supported and further embedded in the future. One respondent from the voluntary sector argued that “hard-edged projects” with “young people at risk” should be supported and resourced, if the society is serious about “real intervention” to tackle the attraction of anti-social behaviour and support of paramilitaries among this post-ceasefire generation. He noted:

These may be expensive projects, but they are worthwhile. This is a transitional period for young people, and this is an opportunity to work with them on a personal level, when peer pressure is at its strongest. We have to target the leaders in these communities. It is this level of intervention that is required. One-to-one work.

A respondent from the youth sector reflected on her organisation’s learning in relation to the type of approach required. She advocates for increased cross-community contact to address issues of sectarianism and racism among young people:

What we have realised is that the best work is face-to-face contact. Young people need this in terms of life experiences. There are organisations which are genuinely committed to getting to that point. But, it needs preparation work before contact. That work is not just about focusing on how wonderful things are now. It should be about giving children safe spaces to talk and explore the challenges they face. Contact work that focuses on less contentious issues does not challenge them. Contact works best when identity stuff is challenged back within their own groups. They need space within their own environments – back in your own space to work out what it all means.

It was also suggested that the relationships between the younger and older generations require attention, and intergenerational work is particularly valuable, given their varying experiences of the conflict and the opportunity to learn from, and discuss, the impact of the conflict with those who lived through it. As a respondent from the grantmaking sector noted, this type of initiative requires active leadership:

There is a great onus on the older generations to work with the young people in order to ensure they are woven into communities and feel ownership of them.

Concerns were raised that the nature of funding, stringent procedures and guidance for working with young people and insecurity of employment among youth and community workers is resulting in a “lack of risk taking and a risk avoidance culture” in youth work practice. Respondents called for an increased focus on collaborative partnerships and working to the strengths and expertise of each organisation or service, in order to deliver the most appropriate services to young people, while continuing to prioritise good relations as a common and dominant thread throughout.

- **Employment and the Workplace**

The development of an increasingly mixed and diverse workplace was acknowledged by several respondents as being a key policy success to date. However, a sizeable number also indicated that further work remains to ensure further progress in support of contact and meaningful engagement in the workplace and there is little room for complacency. This was noted as being of particular importance within the private sector, which was not thought to be as mixed in workforce as the public sector currently. While a series of legislative changes since the mid-1970s (Osborne, 2004) have resulted in a considerable increase in the numbers of people employed in mixed workplaces, respondents indicated that this change is neither consistent across sectors nor as comprehensive as it could be. A respondent from the business sector noted:

The private business sector does recognise that they have a role to play in shared workplaces, but they are far from experts in this area. They need to have examples of how change can be made that goes beyond the legislative requirements. It is also about a shift in attitudes, both employers and employees. It is so important to keep the business community around the table. Businesses want to be heard, but they often are not.

One political representative argued that by ensuring that individuals are part of the workforce, and employed in mixed workplace environments, barriers of division and mistrust will be broken down. He noted:

In working environments, people are quite comfortable working together. It generates tolerance in people and it broadens peoples’ horizons. People see this engagement as a positive experience, when they focus on bread and butter issues. This will ultimately reduce pressure on the state.

However, three other respondents from different sectors expressed doubts that contact in the workplace alone would be sufficient to address sectarianism or racism and encourage broader interaction and sharing. One noted:

As a result of the legislation, the workplace has now become a sterile zone. This was not the purpose of the equality legislation, but this is what has been the result. Employers discourage discussion and debate on issues that divide. People are mixing, but the environment has been sterilised. While the legislation was vital at a time, we now need to encourage more openness and creativity in how people mix and express their own multiple identities in the workplace.

It is evident that, despite the comparative success in equality legislation for employment practices, greater awareness of the benefits of mixing and the contribution it can make to broader societal changes is required.

- **Lack of shared spaces and duplication of services**

On the broad issue of supporting and encouraging the development of ‘shared spaces’ and ‘shared services’, it was noted by many respondents that, while significant momentum has been building in encouraging a broad debate on its necessity and efficacy, its practical application has been limited to date. It was acknowledged that the origins of a new discourse around ‘sharing’ can be found in the *Shared Future* policy document of 2005, and that the emphasis placed on encouraging and developing new ‘shared spaces’ by the PEACE III Programme has been an important subsequent development. The focus on the development of shared resources in areas of high deprivation and interface areas was acknowledged as helpful, but limited without broader political encouragement in the form of an overall strategic approach. One political respondent noted:

In relation to the development of shared space, there has been some progress made here, but it is limited and qualified. There are very few spaces where there is honest sharing. It is mainly sharing being done by denying identity. It needs to go further than that. But this is not just a matter of changing the physical reality for people. It is a process of changing mindsets and countering fear with confidence.

It was noted that government departments could do much more to support the development of shared spaces and shared services, but that this required “calculated risk-taking” and “confident leadership and a supportive environment”. One community and voluntary sector respondent noted that the development of shared spaces requires a thorough mapping of the key stakeholders in any context, and an understanding of “how they relate to one another.” She noted:

It won’t happen by itself. The default position of communities is separation. That’s what they are used to for the most part. It will require it to be managed, but that requires a clear directive from above, that everyone is on the same page and working to the same goals.

A number of respondents also agreed that, while the rhetoric of sharing is important and welcome, it means little without “joined-up thinking” and “collaborative community planning” and requires that “all the agencies are brought in, in order to provide real sustainability.”

- **Interfaces and physical barriers**

In response to the question of issues requiring attention, a sizeable number of respondents made reference ‘interface’ areas, particularly physical barriers erected to address the inter-communal violence. These so-called ‘peace lines’, including walls, fences, barriers, security gates and buffer-zones between predominately Catholic and predominately Protestant neighbourhoods, range in length from a few metres to a few kilometres. All respondents concurred that the continued existence and erection of physical barriers highlights the distance yet to be travelled in building the trust and

confidence between communities living in their proximity. They also agreed that their removal was by no means straightforward and should not necessarily be rushed. One respondent argued that the issue of artificial barriers erected to separate communities should be placed within a broader historical and political context. She noted that the physical divisions are “just a manifestation of the conflict” and addressed by tackling “the real social issues”. Only then will they “lose their meaning and purpose.” She went on to say:

People are clambering to bring the walls down, but you cannot do this work in isolation. The removal of the walls should not be the focus of attention. The focus should be on relationship building and regeneration and that work should be led by the local community.

A number of respondents also wished to make clear that physical barriers - in whatever form they take - should not be removed prematurely as a mere symbolic act by the political leadership, as this would not only be a cynical exercise, but might well place the communities living in their proximity in unsafe, stressful positions. It was felt that safety at the feet of unsustainable “grand gestures”. However, a community sector director also made the point that “the longer the walls stay up the more difficult it is to get a solution.” Another political representative agreed, viewing the interfaces as symbolic of wider political and community tensions. She noted:

The issue of interfaces will not be resolved until the wider issues are resolved. Tribal politics gives the nod to those communities that if they are arguing on the hill, they have permission to do so too. Interfaces are the most visible symptom of a wider political malaise. We cannot just throw money at them. It needs to be about wider engagement in these geographical areas. People think too much about the walls and that it is the walls that are making them safe. They need to look at it differently. It is the people on the other side of the walls that can keep them safe. It is just symbolism to take the walls down now. You need to deal with the issues. Then the communities will tear the walls down themselves. People have become very comfortable with division. They think it is normal. Why would you want to be challenged?

A Belfast-based voluntary sector respondent reflected:

Anecdotally, everyone is saying that they have to come down. But they are a necessary evil. My belief is that the closer you are to them, the less right you have to have a view on them. It's a chicken and egg situation. The work is really to make the walls irrelevant.

This last comment reflected the views of many respondents, who argued that interface issues are complex and challenging and require sensitive intervention and collaboration between the many stakeholders involved. However, not all those interviewed agreed. One felt that it was time for the walls to be removed. He noted:

The physical violence has stopped so why do you need a wall? Walls create their own sets of attitudes. It has a mindset that goes with it. Walls are indicators of other problems of mistrust. Time will help with these interactions, but it is better that they are removed now and that work starts in earnest.

There was some recognition given to initiatives that have been taken to date to work with communities around these physical barriers. However, there appeared to be general consensus that these initiatives require increased support and enhancement, both at a political and a community level. A statutory sector respondent, who has direct contact with a number of communities living with interface walls noted:

There is a real interest from within the interface communities themselves, but this is not always met with action. There is a concern that communities' appetite will be frustrated if they do not see progress. They need the symbolism of seeing shared neighbourhoods at work. We need practical strong messages. That is the type of leadership I am talking about.

A director of a Belfast-based community organisation's view was that, in his experience, those living at interface areas are reluctant to see the physical barriers removed because they mean more to the community than just a separation - they have practical application, including a function of traffic-calming for some areas. He notes that even the "opening of gates" is an incremental step that requires a multi-agency approach in order to address not only the fears and mistrust that exist within communities, but also the practical implications for the communities. Another added that there should be a review of the role and purpose of community workers who were employed specifically to work within these divided neighbourhoods.

We need to work out what to do with interface workers. They do have some influence and local knowledge, but they should not have this sense of entitlement, just because of their history. They have done some good work but it is patchy.

On the other hand, another head of a voluntary sector organisation cautioned against what she saw as a growing negativity towards the work of community leaders. She noted:

Leadership on the ground needs to instil confidence and support. There is a lot of focus placed on those doing the wrong thing. It is important to focus on people that are displaying good examples, so that people have leadership and inspiration. There is exceptional work going on among leading loyalist and republicans in addressing parading and interface issues in Belfast. They need to be supported in these leadership roles and the positives focused upon.

Another respondent referred to the ownership arrangements, which add an additional layer of complexity to the issue:

Most peace walls are owned by NIO [Northern Ireland Office] so it is interesting to ask who would be tasked with taking them down. Others have been built on Housing Executive land, for example. Now it is more complex as some are the responsibility of the Department of Justice. It would have to be completed as collaborative work between departments as it involves thinking about the location of other facilities, including schools and health centres.

Of those respondents which identified interfaces and barriers as outstanding issues to be addressed, the majority view was that ongoing work was required to facilitate communities to come together

and build relationships of trust before any significant or irreversible changes can be considered. The funding and support organisations who participated in the interviews expressed a commitment to supporting this work, but on the proviso that this is viewed within a broad strategic regeneration plan, with multi-agency buy-in.

Practices and Supports

A general theme emerged in the course of the interviews focused on the strategic decisions taken, and methodological approaches adopted, to support the development of improved relations and individual and societal reconciliation. This is a broad area of discussion, encompassing 'community relations' and 'community development' practice, the current structures to support, inform and develop practice, the measurement and evaluation of impact and the overall funding environment of such practice-based work. These are overlapping issues, so this section has been structured in as coherent a manner as possible, acknowledging that each issue raises a set of others, which are addressed subsequently.

○ Methodological approaches to good relations work

There appeared to be broad agreement among respondents of a continued need to review and refresh the 'practice' of building good relationships between individuals, communities and sectors. Several respondents reflected on the long history of practice and noted that a variety of approaches could be said to make up 'community relations' or 'good relations' work. They alluded to evidence of increasing maturity within the broad field of 'community relations' and acknowledged the significant commitment of many to support and maintain 'relationship building' activities, even during the worst periods of the violent conflict. However, they noted that there does not appear to be agreement on the validity or efficacy of particular approaches or on the value of developing more 'standardised' approaches which could be applied to a broad variety of settings. This, it was noted, was leading to a confusion of approaches, disagreement over what 'works', weak coordination between particular interventions, poor utilisation of resources and lack of organisational memory, as changes in staff and volunteers as a result of funding cycles. Some references were made to what was perceived as a "lack of professionalism" within the community and voluntary sector, with "varying standards" and "amateurism" prevalent. Concerns were also raised as to the quality of some training programmes offered and the "limited shelf-life" of resources developed.

Significant focus was afforded to the on-going discourse on the relationship between 'community development' and 'community relations' practices and the linkages and divergence between the two approaches. A number of respondents argued for the recognition of intra-community development work as a valuable contribution to the building of good relations and broader social change objectives in its own right. Others noted that an intra-community approach should only be understood within the context of a broader strategy which builds towards a greater degree of inter-community engagement and should only be supported on that basis. It is interesting to note the extent to which community-based 'single-identity' activity was framed and described by respondents, not as 'good relations', but as 'community development work'. This distinction appeared to be predicated on an understanding that the nature of division and segregation in Northern Ireland requires a community development

response which is predominately focused on 'single-identity' communities. Only following this type of intervention was it felt that 'community relations' work was possible. A respondent from the grantmaking sector argued:

Community development is often the first approach that is necessary because areas are so segregated. If you look at deprived areas, they are very inward-looking. It makes it difficult to engage them in thinking about cross-community work.

Some have argued that this distinction in approaches is unnecessary and runs counter to common understanding of community development work elsewhere, which does not correlate 'community development' and 'single identity' work so closely. However, there was recognition from a number of respondents that 'forced' or 'false' inter-community work would not achieve its desired objectives. A respondent from the grantmaking sector noted that, for them, capacity building is an important aspect of the overall approach to good relations work.

There are capacity issues to address. We do give money to small groups. Single-identity work on identity and cultural issues are funded, but we have to see a plan for a progression model to engage with other communities. They need to demonstrate that they have a developed plan and that they have contact already with peers. We tend to target the most marginalised communities and work with them to build their capacity. Otherwise, how can they take the next step?

In analysing the research data, two main issues were identified as requiring ongoing attention. The first, as noted above, was the need to review the linkages between community development and good relations practices to ensure complementarity, rather than contradiction. The second relates to community leadership, particularly among the PUL (Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist) community.

In terms of the first point, there was acknowledgement from a range of respondents that outstanding work is still required to build the capacity of some communities on an intra-community basis, before cross-community engagement. The actual and perceived linkages between community development practices and relationship-focused work were identified as another issue requiring ongoing consideration and new strategic thinking. One respondent's view was very clear. His belief was that a "fundamental look at community development work and how it works on good relations issues" is urgently required. He went on to say:

Continual funding of single-identity groups is fundamentally wrong. How much time do these communities need? It just creates a dependency.

Another respondent viewed this as a strategic weakness in government departments' approach to working within community settings.

At the moment, single-identity work is being supported because it relates to who shouts the loudest. Departments such as DSD [Department for Social Development] and DARD [Department of Agriculture and Rural Development] do not have an exit strategy for single-identity work and the groups do not find any need to engage with cross-community activity.

Yet others felt that government funding should no longer be targeted at so-called 'single-identity' neighbourhoods and that communities should be incentivised to work on a cross-community basis. The respondent quoted above also indicated that, in his view, the lack of understanding of what community development work entails is most prevalent within government departments and funding organisations. He notes that:

Without a fundamental understanding of what you are doing, how can you make strategic funding decisions? There needs to be an understanding that you cannot do community development work without doing community relations and good relations work. The non-negotiables are things like social justice and equality. These cannot be done in single-identity mode. There needs to be community relation assessments within so-called community development programmes. Otherwise, you just end up with more of the same.

There was acknowledgement from three respondents, from both the community and the statutory sectors, that 'Neighbourhood Renewal' (NR) and other government schemes, targeted at areas with high levels of deprivation, have largely reflected the segregated nature of Northern Ireland. One respondent noted: "We haven't got passed the carve-up yet. However, there is a commitment to require networking between Neighbourhood Renewal areas and encourage contact." Speaking on another geographically targeted fund, a public sector respondent noted:

The grants that were available were carved up in the grant application process. This is due to the segregated nature of the communities and the community and voluntary sector. This shows that more strategic intervention is required so we do not end up with this division of money, which is not as effective.

Another respondent, working in an interface area, noted that the support provided by NR schemes has been instrumental in supporting those cross-community linkages in developing. He said:

Were it not for Neighbourhood Renewal, our cross-community work would not be able to happen, as the community forums could not exist. These community structures have been really useful as it allows the work to continue on a day-to-day basis.

The director of a Belfast-based community organisation noted that through the funding of key posts, individuals "are resourced to take risks and provide leadership." In the past, this lack of leadership within communities was, in his view "a barrier to engaging with the Protestant communities because we couldn't find the people to work with." However, there were calls for a review of programmes such as Neighbourhood Renewal in order to ensure they are making a positive contribution to good relations objectives. One political representative viewed the employment of community development workers from the neighbourhoods they serve as flawed:

Employing community leaders ... they are not always the best people. It is about keeping people in jobs. In terms of the amount of money that has been poured into these areas, the results are not good. Some of them are sitting very comfortably in their jobs but not achieving very much ... We have invested too much in people and they move on. We need to support shared facilities that leave a legacy.

A community sector respondent noted that, for his community, the reality was that obvious cross-community opportunities were not available within close proximity to their target area. It was, therefore, particularly difficult for them to build meaningful relationships with the 'other' that were not solely about meeting the criteria set by funding bodies. He argued that, although his organisation is solely engaged in single-identity work, they view this as 'good relations work'. He did not expand on why this was the case, despite follow-on questions. A political representative argued that cross-community work is to be encouraged, "but not if it is with the same people all the time." She advocated an acknowledgment of the requirement for a diversity of approaches, based on the identified need within the target communities. This, she noted, might involve both intra- and inter-community engagement. A number of respondents felt that the means by which communities engage should be reviewed, and priority placed on supporting projects and initiatives which require people to work together "for common aims". Specifically, four respondents indicated that a focus on socio-economic change should be the vehicle for interaction. One described it thus:

If people focus on socio-economic change, then common issues can be addressed. There are many people who feel that have yet to benefit from peace. They need to be able to feel the change. We cannot afford for communities to become more disadvantaged than they are at present. We advocate a greater focus on socio-economic issues and finding ways to work together to stimulate economic development.

In relation to the second issue, several respondents made reference to what was described by one as "an accepted reality" - namely that the level and capacity of community leaders within the PUL community was lower than that within the Catholic community. While not wholly disputing this analysis, all respondents who addressed the issue identified this as an area of concern. A number did, however, express the view that the leadership of PUL communities has seen some gradual improvement in recent years. A director of a community organisation noted: "When you drill down, the experience within the PUL communities is often better than your expectations." A Good Relations Officer, working within a local authority said:

The idea that there is low PUL capacity and participation is both a reality and a perception. There is still a difference in how Catholics and Protestants engage. This is improving drastically though. It is still an issue, but it is progressing. There are different cultural patterns that we have to be mindful of in designing our work.

A statutory sector respondent, with responsibility for community-based activities noted:

There is a disconnection with the hard-to-reach communities, particularly in loyalist areas. There is a fear that they are being left behind. There are gatekeepers at work in some of these communities, although this is changing. There is a lot of cross-community activity at the community leader's level, but not sure how far this is penetrating down. This is a serious concern.

A community respondent, working on projects within loyalist neighbourhoods, noted:

Some people have been accused of being gatekeepers. Perhaps they are right. But sometimes it is necessary to ensure good work.

A number of other respondents, including a grantmaker with a long history of community-based funding, observed that in their experience, the sense of alienation among some Protestant communities is still strong but that “the capacity issues are improving.” All respondents who raised the issue identified it as an area that requires strategic planning and collaborative working across the various stakeholders in order to ensure that the positive improvements noted are built upon and consolidated.

- **Leadership and Strategic Coordination**

In broad terms, when focusing on good relations ‘practice’, many respondents viewed this as shorthand for the activities of ‘civil society’, including the community and voluntary sector, church and faith-based activities. There was acknowledgement that the range of actors and activities involved is much broader and the responsibilities for ensuring a ‘shared and better future’ do not solely rest on the shoulders of the non-governmental and non-statutory sectors. That being said, a specific thread of discussions centred on the activities of those often tasked with devising and implementing programmes and projects to objectives set not only by themselves, but also as a result of dominant government policies and funders’ priorities. As one grantmaker sector respondent put it:

Bottom-up approaches are vital to this overall strategy to develop good relations. Civil society will ultimately have to drive this, albeit under the umbrella of CSI, perhaps. This is a community and societal issue, not just a political one.

A number of respondents were critical of what they viewed as the lack of a “collective voice” or “cohesive strategy for good relations within the community and voluntary sector.” This was acknowledged as being due, in part, to the segregated nature of the society. However, as one respondent argued:

This should not be viewed as an accepted reality that we have to work around, but as an issue that needs to be tackled head on and real leadership shown to move beyond these artificial divisions.

A number of respondents referenced the “culture of competition” within the sector, where organisations were viewed as “very guarded” and “territorial”. There was some criticism expressed of umbrella bodies, such as the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA), which were seen to have taken “too neutral” an approach and to “supporting segregation through their silence on these issues.” While several acknowledged that the Council is membership driven and thus must reflect the views of all of its membership, they felt that this demonstrated a lack of leadership from the sector to tackle the impact of segregation and sectarianism in the society. One respondent noted: “If they are intent on holding the government and statutory sectors to account for their decisions, it is time they were seen to be doing their bit too.”

The role and function of the Community Relations Council (CRC) was raised by a number of people during the course of the interviews. The CS/ Consultation document makes specific reference to the future role of the Council and set out a number of proposed options for consideration. This, perhaps, provoked new reflection from respondents as to how they understood the role of the Council currently, what they felt its strengths and weaknesses were and how it might usefully function and contribute in the future. Overall, a significant majority of respondents spoke of the CRC in positive terms, indicating that they felt that it has made an important contribution in both the policy and practice environment. The organisation was variously described as having been “very supportive”, having “impressive leadership” and having been “a tower of strength” during challenging periods for community-based practitioners. Several respondents took a different position, describing the CRC as “a beast of a different time” and “not as fit-for-purpose as it could be.” It was clear from those interviewed that, in light of the CS/ consultation paper, there was an urgent need for clarity on the future role of the Council to ensure that the appropriate structures are in place, and responsibilities delineated in order to guarantee continued momentum on good relations work. Respondents had varying views on how they understood the current functions of the Council and in what ways these functions should be prioritised in future.

One interviewee from the statutory sector outlined what he saw as the three main roles of the Council, namely: an information role, a funding role and a policy and advocacy role. Of these roles, his view was that the strength of the Council lay in the provision of information, guidance and good practice exemplars, as well as in the development of a strong policy and networking role, with the development of “a cadre of people who can act as challengers to the politicians and are also willing to work and explore this privately.” In terms of funding role, his view was that “really, anyone can do this work” and that the Council may have become “preoccupied” and “swamped” by an over-focus on this role. His belief was that the strength of the organisation lay in the development of a strong network of individuals and organisations that are “sympathetic and willing to work hard for change” and the work undertaken to place community relations at the heart of government policy was only now beginning to bear fruit and therefore requires continued support.

Several other respondents noted drawbacks to the current balance of work within the organisation. One respondent from a grantmaking organisation felt that the Council’s role as funding body had “diluted” their ability to function successfully as a policy advocate and that it had not “achieved the right balance”. Another, from the same sector, described the Council’s role as grantmaker “a mistake” and that the organisation “should have stuck to critical policy work.” Yet another, from the statutory sector, indicated that the confusion over the balance of roles was historical, as the Council had “never been given a clear mandate” and that its “mission has been defined by government.” This respondent advocated for the Council having complete independence from government in order to be “an effective and challenging voice.”

However, not all agreed with this refocusing of roles. A respondent, from the community and voluntary sector, felt that the Council’s strength lay in its funding profile and its direct engagement with those who were delivering good relations work on the ground. She indicated that a specific need remains for an organisation which can identify and support the development of best practice around good relations work, as well as acting as connector and conduit between government and communities. She felt that, with an internal review, the organisation could reorient its focus in this regard. A number

of other respondents from the community and local government sectors spoke of their positive experiences of working with CRC in both a grantmaker-grantee relationship and as a networking and information-sharing point for others working on good relations activities. Three respondents felt that the CRC should not attempt to take on a “practitioner role”, as this would only serve to confuse their mandate further in the eyes of the public.

A key theme emerging was the ongoing need for a structure which would provide a challenge function to the policymaking sector and could act as a “critical friend” to government. In the view of a voluntary sector director:

The CRC has been marginalised by OFMdfM. We have to ask them seriously: Are you respecting the independence of the sector and take the criticism levied against you? Or are you intent on sidelining voices that you don’t agree with?

A number of respondents indicated the need for some vehicle through which examples of good practice can be disseminated and translated so as to ensure transferability of learning within and between sector and geographical areas. A number indicated their preference for an organisation that was completely independent of government interference. As one respondent from a large funding body noted:

Having an independent body could bring a certain discipline to the work and greater strategic planning around cohesion issues and allocation of funding.

As indicated previously, the interviews conducted suggest that many have identified a gap in knowledge in terms of good practice, how to measure the impact and how to ensure value-for-money. The majority of respondents felt that CRC has gone some way to addressing this need, but that a more systemic review of community relations practice is required, coupled with a means of ensuring that learning is captured, accessible and utilised by others. However, a number referred to “stagnation” and a “lack of creativity” among some community-based practitioners. Several noted that decisions made by funders were having a significant bearing on the types of projects being undertaken and organisations’ willingness or ability to share the learning gained.

Of those who raised the question of the role and functioning of the Council, the majority argued for the continued need for such a body to continue to function and be supported. However, opinions on the way forward varied. From the political responses, views included: “There are systemic changes that have to be made”; “It does need to be updated”; “It does not have the leverage to influence the economic and social issues that will make a difference” and “Our view is that good relations should be core to government and that policy should rest with government.” From the statutory sector other opinions were expressed: “They have to be seen as more than just an irritant”; “They should have a stronger referral role”; “I sometimes wonder about their penetration and their influence on different departments, agencies and bodies.” The responses from those more directly engaged in community-based practices were mixed. One view was that “there is still little or no joined up-ness in some of this work”, while another was that “we absolutely need this type of organisation. Without it, who is there to challenge government and continue to refresh our thinking and practice?”

○ **Financial resource allocation**

A significant number of respondents acknowledged the substantial resources which have been channelled into the variously defined objectives of improving community relations, and supporting reconciliation. Many noted that, in their view, the level of financial investment has been significantly higher than similar conflict regions internationally, and expressed appreciation of the number of grantmakers which had targeted resources at the region in the past decades. Several acknowledged that a very sizeable level of resourcing, particularly to the third sector, had come from external sources, including the European Union, inter-governmental bodies, diaspora foundations and private philanthropists. While there was recognition of central government funding, both from direct rule and devolved administration budgets in support of good relations priorities, there was a common view expressed that these financial commitments may well be insufficient to tackle the many legacies of the conflict that remain.

One of the key challenges identified was in understanding the overall landscape of resources available to support good relations and reconciliation work, the particular aims of each funder and the type of impact they envisaged having for a particular issue or area. A difficulty identified by a political representative was the apparent “policy vacuum” that external funders are working within, which has created an “artificial cap” on the limits of its effectiveness. He drew on the example of the integrated education sector, which has received significant external financial support yet has not had a conducive policy environment to work within, thereby hindering its progress. Citing the lack of “a locally developed vision as to where Northern Ireland is heading”, he believes the major external funders “have not been successful in clearly articulating their purpose and direction of travel.” He also noted “the irony” that the new development of the CSI policy framework is taking place within a context in which some of the major external funders are “winding down” their spending in the region. He suggested that there “needs to be a cyclical feedback of ideas between funders and policymakers and that is not working at present.” Another respondent from the business sector suggested that: “There should be a virtuous relationship between public bodies, grantmakers and government departments for effective linking and collaboration.” Concerns were also expressed about the level of funding dependency that exists within the third sector – a sector which has seen a significant level of activity, supported by external funding sources, particularly since the mid-1990s. One respondent asked:

Where do we go from here? This has got to become a central issue, because the grantmakers cannot continue to support this work indefinitely. This has to become embedded in the public bodies.

However, one respondent from a large funding body argued that the positive legacies of the funding are the structures and networks which have been developed within, between and across sectors. These are viewed as partnerships which will maintain long after the funding streams have been withdrawn.

Funding sources, including government departments were criticised by a number of interviewees for the lack of strategic thinking in supporting activities in so-called ‘areas of crises’. A number indicated that funding streams have been made available to areas deemed particularly challenging, at risk or as having experienced overt sectarian tensions and violence. This was described by one political representative as “throwing money at a crisis” and “rewarding bad behaviour.” This latter phrase was

used, without prompting by the researcher, by an additional five interviewees, indicating a particular discourse is developing around this issue. The political representative went on to describe this type of intervention as “pointing to a lack of understanding about the dynamics of conflict” and as “more about managing conflict than peace.” He went on to say: “To date, a lot of work has been piecemeal and uncoordinated. There has been a tendency to fund crisis intervention work. This cannot be funding for political expediency.”

A Good Relations Officer (GRO) noted: “We have to be careful about the balance of where we work in and for what reason. It cannot always be about working in the areas that make the most noise.” She recounted being told by a community worker in a large single-identity housing estate that “It seems like the only way to get money is to have an interface and the odd riot.” Another GRO agreed, noting:

It is a fine line. Community groups are, at times, trying to leverage money. Sometimes you do feel that tensions have been whipped up within communities to get attention. It is a challenge for us to ensure that the right people are being targeted.

At government departmental level, there was acknowledgment that some funding schemes previously offered should have been more rigorously reviewed for impact and value-for-money. One such scheme mentioned was the summer intervention fund which has targeted areas of tension and unrest within parts of Belfast for the past six years. It was noted that such schemes should be treated as additional funding, rather than merely “plugging the gaps” in other government departments’ or agencies’ budgets, as was suspected. It was also felt that such schemes should be less time-bound and reactive, with a more strategic and long-term focus.

Given that there has been a tendency for funders to focus on particular geographical or thematic areas, depending on the presenting issues and their own strategic priorities, some concerns were raised about the capacity of recipient organisations to adequately manage and utilise the financial resources which have been made available to them. Geographical areas were mentioned in this regard included North Belfast, which has received additional and supplementary government resources since 2002. Sectoral areas noted included the victims’ and survivors’ sector, which has witnessed a significant growth in the number of organisations established since the late 1990s. In both instances, several respondents indicated that community groups may have developed a sense of ‘entitlement’ to funding, but not necessarily the capacity or community support to manage or utilise these new income streams effectively. One political representative put the decisions made by some funding organisations thus: “Sometimes it feels like it is more pandering than progressive.”

There was some criticism, however, of a perceived “nervousness” among some grantmakers to support small community-based organisations, which may not have sophisticated structures. As a director of a community and voluntary sector organisation put it:

There is now a tendency to give money to larger organisations, which they view as being a safe pair of hands. But the work needs to happen on the ground and where the issues manifest themselves. Funders need to lose their anxiety around so-called gatekeepers.

The future of grant aid in support of good relations and reconciliation initiatives was raised by the majority of those interviewed. One representative of a funding programme does not believe that the impact of funding reductions from various sources – including government monies – has sunk in as yet. She noted that responsibility for planning for this eventuality falls on both the grant and contract recipients themselves as well as with the grantmakers or commissioning bodies. Expanding on this point, she said:

Groups need to see how they can make themselves more sustainable and to plan for worst-case scenarios. Funders have a responsibility to target funding well but also be flexible to address clear needs identified. It cannot be poorly spent.

A respondent from the political sector did not view the reduction in government funding as a particular area of concern. He noted:

We have a large good relations budget. It is about spending it effectively. That's what we should be concentrating on. Not worrying about keeping people in jobs for the sake of it.

A number of respondents made it clear that government departments, public bodies and funding organisations should work with their grant recipients to explore creative modes of delivering quality programmes and services in cost-effective ways, while also ensuring that they deliver on identified good relations outcomes. As a community and voluntary organisation's director noted: "There are still too many silos in this work. We need less money, more commitment to work in partnerships."

Another criticism made of grant providers was the apparent lack of communication and collaborative working between themselves as stakeholders within a given context. As one interviewee from the funding sector put it:

It is true that funders are not talking to each other very effectively. The structures are there, but now we need to work together. There is a real need to define each agency's role and their parameters so as not to cause overlap, duplication and conflict. These tensions between funders can be exploited by communities for their own benefits.

In addition, it was felt that the funding organisations did not always encourage their grant recipients to work with other organisations (in some instances, which they also fund) in their particular geographical area or on similar thematic issues. The development of better communication and collaborative working practices between funding bodies was identified several times as another means of ensuring effective use of resources. As one funder representative put it:

The cocktail of funds available has been a negative issue in some cases, as each funder has different priorities and needs. For our funding, the reconciliation aspect has been upfront, but this is not the case with all the projects.

Another funder representative recognised that some tensions existed at times. He noted:

There is sometimes a tension between independent funders and statutory funders. Sometimes it feels like they are herding us. There can be encroachment. There really is not the facility for blue skies thinking. There is some technical coordination but not much else. With a bit more pressure towards sharing space, they could go beyond functionality.

Another funder representative tempered the calls for greater collaborative working across sectors:

There is some risk involved in joining up funding. Then it's a case of - if you're in, you're in. If you're out, you're out. This can cut out experimentation and innovation, which often comes from these independent funders. They can support creativity, as well as identify issues early. If you are too close to the public sector, I believe it could neutralise the risk-taking that independent grantmakers excel in.

It is clear that while respondents value the contribution made by grantmakers enormously, questions still remain as the levels of cooperation and collaboration required between funders in order to, ensure the optimal use of resources within a diminishing financial context.

○ **Evaluating what works**

One respondent from the political sector noted: "It is time to have a hard conversation about what has worked and why." A significant number of respondents acknowledged that there may well be a wealth of good ideas, good practices and good outcomes related to good relations and reconciliation in existence but that, for various reasons, this information is not being adequately documented and shared – resulting in a loss of learning and unnecessary duplication of activities and resources. A statutory sector employee, referring specifically about work within the youth sector, asked:

Where are the examples of practice to be disseminated? They are not being documented. So, there is little inspiration for others ... I am not talking about showcasing work. That is just self-promotion. It is about finding good, educational ways you can skill up those working with young people. This work has to be transferable to other contexts and tailored accordingly.

Another respondent from the grantmaking sector stated:

There are lots of interesting projects. Good projects. But the question is: Where are they headed? The sector is depressed and people are burned out. There is a lack of faith that huge progress will be made because people are never really told what impact their work has made. There has to be a better way of capturing the learning and building on it.

However, a political sector respondent had another perspective on sharing of learning. His view was:

It is just as important that we learn what *not* to do. We need to learn from Belfast and apply that learning to areas like Rasharkin or Coleraine. We have got to capture and share the lessons learned, even if that means learning them the hard way. We don't want to end up with more interface walls. We need to learn to work collaboratively in order to prevent the same things happening somewhere else.

More than half of all those interviewed identified the measurement and evaluation of impact as an outstanding issue requiring immediate attention. Respondents spoke of the need for some form of taking-stock of good relations lessons-learned in order to ensure that future resource investment is strategically planned and based on solid evidence of impact. This was described as being of particular importance, given the diminishing financial resources which will be available to support intervention activities in the coming years.

There was acknowledgment that a significant proportion of projects have undergone some form of evaluative process during, or following, their implementation. However, there was a high level of criticism of both the quality of reviews undertaken and the process by which the learning from such evaluations is shared and utilised to improve on existing practice. Several political representatives shared their views on this issue. One noted that “evaluation reports are rarely negative. Evaluators do not want to be negative as these projects employ staff and benefit the community.” Another noted that, despite numerous reviews and evaluations, “what we haven’t been able to see are outcomes. We haven’t been able to capture the impact of this work.” Yet another’s view was: “There have been huge amounts of spend in some areas – but to what dividend? There need to be hard questions asked around that.” Similar sentiments were shared by several other respondents, most notably within the statutory sector. One party representative advocated for a full, independent evaluation of the financial support which has been “poured in this sector.”

However, it was acknowledged by a number of interviewees that the practice of measuring the outcomes and/or impact of an intervention is far from straightforward. As a community sector director put it: “This work is messy and difficult to measure.” However, he did go on to say: “It is still important to identify specific actions and measurable tools.” It was suggested by a number of interviewees that one of the challenges to measuring outcomes of projects is that the actual goals and objectives of the projects are not clarified from the outset. As a Good Relations Officer put it:

Projects are more likely to be successful if you know why you are doing something. There needs to be strategic thinking behind what you are doing.

Respondents were also keen to describe what they understood as a disconnection between the reviewing and evaluation of practice, and the sharing of that learning in order to inform future practice. One political sector respondent asked:

How do you get that work to be more prominent and understood? What should the projects be doing to try to sell this more? We have a lot to learn about this still. The community and voluntary sector is a huge sector, and yet, we are still unaware of a lot of good work taking place.

Another political representative indicated that, in her view, it was the responsibility of funding bodies, including government departments to “hold people to account.” With the development of more robust monitoring and evaluation methods, a statutory sector respondent argued, the focus will shift from the measurement of outputs to milestones and outcomes. This will, he believes, lead to much greater impact in the long term. Some respondents were highly critical of what they viewed as being wastage of resources. One political representative’s view was: “There are a lot of sacred cows and fiefdoms.

A lot of the time, these community leaders are thinking about ‘what is in it for me?’” From within the sector itself, one community leader noted:

There are a lot of groups out there being funded who are not doing anything useful. People are fitting into the criteria of funders. It is not coming from the ground up.

A representative of a grant programme presented a different perspective. In his view:

This is a long-term process and we are looking for long term gains. This is the work of generations. The financial investment to date has not been wasted, but there is always the possibility that the ship might need a little adjustment. We should be looking for constant examination of our ways of working.

A number of respondents argued that, rather than viewing any overall evaluation of approaches and methodologies which contribute to good relations and reconciliation as a negative exercise, it should be seized as an opportunity to “support what is working” and to “protect the good work.”

- **Changing priorities and approaches**

There was some criticism expressed of the changing priorities of both government and independent grantmakers in recent years and the impact that this has on developing and maturing practices. A statutory sector respondent noted that Northern Ireland has a “history of supporting pilot projects”, both within the statutory and voluntary sector, quipping that “we have more pilots than Ryanair.” However, in his view, few of these pilot projects are ever fully supported or mainstreamed and the institutional learning gained is often lost. An outstanding challenge, in his view, is how to ensure that grantmakers raise the profile of effective projects and ensure that those with the power to mainstream these activities have all the evidence needed to be confident in their effectiveness and potential impact. He noted that, currently “There are a lot of good lessons being learned and the expertise lost because pilots are not followed up.” A view of a director of a community organisation was that “the real difficulty is that governments do not like pilot projects because if they succeed, then they look for additional money.” Another respondent, from the political sector, agreed with this analysis:

There has been a ‘pilot’ approach to a lot of work with communities. There has not been a good pick up from the number of pilots, despite the number of evaluations that have been done. Some of this has been due to government funding cycles, which tend to run in three year cycles. So, even 12 or 18 months in, the project is looking for funding opportunities again. There is no guarantee of funding, so this inevitably militates against long-term sustainability. At a strategic level, including within the Programme for Government, there is a need for longer-term security for good projects ... There is a danger that a lot of the money invested in pilots has been lost. There needs to be a holistic look at what has been achieved and what the outputs have been.

A respondent from the grantmaking sector argued for delivery organisations to “refresh their ideas” and noted that their grant programme encourages groups to “look at how to tackle issues differently

all the time.” This guards against “stagnation” and ensures “groups think about what they are doing and reflect on how they could improve it continually.” One respondent suggested that the community and voluntary sector needs a dedicated research and development division. He stated: “We need to draw a line in this now, and continue on a smaller scale. Let’s come out of this continual pilot stage and mainstream the good work where it will be most effective.” Some respondents criticised what they saw as wastage of resources due either to poor conceptualisation, planning and/or implementation. Intra-community or single-identity work was singled out for particular criticism, with several arguing that the evidence of change within targeted communities has been limited.

A variety of views were expressed regarding the ‘training’ element of community relations practice, the focus and attention given to training by grantmakers, and the role and purpose that training serves within good relations work. The view of a community organisation’s director was:

There is so much training out there, but less programme work. People are not interested in training. They are interested in good practice and trying things out with the support of mentors. It is good to be able to step back and say “this isn’t working.” There are too many training organisations. What is the quality of training in terms of where we are at now? Training is not needed so much now. People have built enough relationships.

Another respondent, reflecting on the youth sector, argued for a balance to be struck between the training of youth workers and teachers to undertake training, and the practical implementation of their learning on the ground. She asserted:

There needs to be a focus on quality work, particularly on-going face-to-face work with young people. There is a lot of work to be done to develop better skills-training for those working with young people, but we should make sure that we are not abandoning good practice work while focusing on changing bad work.

While making clear that she was not advocating the demise of all training, she argued that real change will only occur within society when people actively engage with each other on a practical level. This, she argues, requires financial support for the implementation of direct programmes of work with individuals and communities rather than the continued training of practitioners without support to put this training into practice.

Cultural, Attitudinal and Behavioural Change

○ Changing Attitudes and Behaviours

Around half of all research respondents identified embedded negative attitudes towards ‘others’, including sectarianism and racism, as a challenging issue requiring significant attention. The director of a voluntary sector organisation described sectarianism as “a breeder of violence” and “a real threat to the long term stability of the region.” However, he concluded that “We have yet to find the right mechanisms to deal with the attitudes of people towards those they often don’t know.” Another community sector worker noted that the difficulty lies in history:

People are embittered by the past and they will pass this on to the next generation again, if we don't intervene. We need to raise a new generation of leaders with different outlooks, so we can isolate the sectarianism that exists in people now.

The view of another from the same sector was that sectarianism will only be successfully addressed through increased contact between communities. However, in order to achieve this, he notes:

Communities need to move beyond neutrality and doing things that are 'safe'. Some of this work will be risky. We have to be ready for this.

One funding programme was described as having addressed the issue of sectarianism through the support of key programmatic work with young people. The rationale for this programme is based on the premise that sectarianism is an inter-generational issue, with sectarian attitudes having been inherited, rather than informed by negative personal experiences and that it is only through an understanding of how attitudes and behaviours are transmitted that changes can be made.

Some respondents viewed the expression of sectarian and racist attitudes as being deeply embedded in all sections of society and that it should not be perceived as an issue solely within those communities where violent manifestations tend to emerge. Several respondents made the similar point that sectarianism and racism is as likely to be found in middle-class homes as in working-class estates. One political sector representative's view was that educated university students are far from immune to negative attitudes towards 'the other'. She said:

There are high levels of sectarianism in the universities, and they can feel like a cold house for some. Students feel apprehension about socialising in certain places. People are very well aware of the many indicators of identity and they make personal choices according to what they see and perceive.

However, one community-based respondent noted that it is only when sectarianism is "manifested crudely on the streets, in the bars, or at the football" that it attracts attention. He believes that:

We have to go back to basics and people need to acknowledge their own role in creating it. To my mind, divided education defies logic, if you are interested in taking this issue seriously.

Two respondents variously noted that, as a society, we have limited understanding of how sectarianism works, and that this is vital if we are to fully understand how to address it. A respondent from the grantmaking sector noted that an opportunity exists to embed messages of "tolerance and mutual respect" within the education sector, but asked: "How do you teach about sectarianism from within a segregated school system?"

There did not appear to be agreement from within the political sector respondents as to the extent of sectarianism in society, or the need to address it through active intervention. One respondent believes that changes in attitudes will come about through changes in people's material circumstances. He noted:

Attitudinal change is about intent. Segregation is there because of attitudes. Sectarianism is not as prevalent as is made out. Material will affect attitudes. Change people's material positions and their attitudes will adapt.

Another political sector respondent noted:

Sectarianism is the real threat to the long-term economic stability of the region and the sooner that everyone realises it, including those sitting in the Assembly, the better.

It is worth observing that few references were made to issues of race, minorities and racism by respondents when asked to reflect on outstanding issues to date. When raised by the interviewer, many acknowledged that racism does exist within the local community. Linkages were also made between the legacy of conflict and the manifestation of racist attitudes towards minority and new migrant groups. A Good Relations Officer noted that, in their local work, the council are mindful that a focus on racism, (which may be seen as "very topical and easier to discuss") should not detract from the outstanding work required to tackle sectarianism. She went on to say:

That would be easy to do. We have chosen very clearly not to do this. It depends on what you want to achieve. To my mind, the two complement each other. If you had political leadership giving a clear steer on this, this would be easier.

○ **Expression of Cultural Identity**

Outstanding issues related to the expression of cultural identity were raised by only a small minority of respondents. This may point to the progress that has been made in broad terms, through the creation of legislative frameworks, structural mechanisms and codes of conduct to manage the objections to particular expressions of identity, including parading, flag flying and bonfires. It may also point to progress at local level, with proactive local authority-led networks and fora for dialogue being formed and mediative interventions being supported. However, this is speculative, as few respondents noted progress in these areas in terms of successes to date.

One community-based respondent noted that, as a society, we have still some way to go in finding the balance between people being free to express their culture, and the creation of shared spaces, freely accessible and acceptable to all. A statutory sector respondent noted what he saw as tensions manifested at local level through "proxy arguments" over particular expressions of identity, such as parading or mural painting. He noted:

We still have some way to go in working out what is appropriate, what is acceptable. This is so directly linked to the politics of this place that it is a much more complex picture than it might seem to the outsider, where the flying of a flag, for example, is completely uncontroversial.

A Good Relations Officer noted that, in her borough, the work of addressing tensions around "flags and emblems" has been "very patchy". She went on to say:

It is generally *ad hoc* and fire fighting at the moment. This is not easy work. It involves working with people often at the margins of communities. We have to be very careful about who we are seen to talk to, for obvious reasons. More so, we have to be very careful about the funding we provide for cultural issues, such as these.

Acknowledging and Dealing with the Past

As noted previously, the majority of respondents failed to raise the issue of 'the past' when questioned on the successes of good relations or a 'shared and better future' to date. This was also true when questioned on the outstanding challenges which remain. When prompted to think about the issue of the past, most respondents agreed that it was an outstanding challenge which remains to be resolved, with one political respondent naming it as "the single biggest issue still to be addressed. This has to form part of where we want to go as a society." Another, from the grantmaking sector noted: "We have a long way to go in terms of reconciling with the past. We do have to acknowledge that this is not something that can be dealt with easily, however."

One could speculate as to the reasons for this relative absence from the forefront of respondents' minds. Firstly, it appears that some form of artificial division exists between the policies and practices of 'community relations', 'good relations' and 'dealing with the past'. 'Dealing with the past' appears to correlate in many people's minds as victims/survivors and former combatant-related issues, with distinct features and needs which go beyond their understanding of 'good relations'. Secondly, this division appears to manifest itself administratively in various funding streams and their criteria for application, the distribution of responsibilities within government departments and the development of policies aimed at addressing the legacies of the conflict on individuals and communities. Finally, the use of the terms 'good relations' and 'shared and better future' in the research questions, rather than other terms such as 'reconciliation', may have had a bearing on how broadly the respondents reflected on the activities they associate with such terminology.

Of those respondents who addressed the issue of 'dealing with the past' as an outstanding challenge, words used to describe the issue included "difficult", "complex", "fragmented" and "piecemeal". As one respondent from the statutory sector described it:

The past will be on every journey we take as a society, planned or accidental. No one ever loses their past. It cannot be abandoned, it is impossible to understand it and, perhaps, futile to explain it. I am not sure how valuable it is to find the definitive version of the past. It is elusive. But openness about where we have been, and acknowledgement of the past, is very important. The past explains the depth of feeling and the gap between people. People are overwhelmed by the enormity of the task *because* it is the past.

A respondent from the grantmaking sector argued:

The issue of the past just won't go away. We need to grasp that nettle, in both practical and symbolic ways. It is often the symbolic stuff that divides the most. How do we disentangle history? It has the possibility of being very destabilising for the peace process until we have a framework for the past.

A political representative echoed a similar view:

This is a vital issue and it is not going to go away. The piecemeal approach that has been taken is expensive. The British and Irish governments need to be showing leadership. Practically also, the policies and legislation have not been fully devolved so it requires input of the British

government. Funding for this area should be outside of normal budget. There is no doubt in my mind that dealing with the past and sectarianism are linked. A coherent strategy around dealing with the past is lacking and this will impact on the development of good relations. There needs to be local political agreement as well. There is an opportunity here, but it must be actioned without delay.

Another political representative highlighted what he saw as the impact that truth-seeking can have on broader relationship-building, referencing the announcement of the Saville Inquiry findings into the events of Bloody Sunday.

The 15 June 2010 was a real moment of reconciliation that I don't think people have given it credit for. People were so dignified. It shows that people in those situations want the truth. In terms of reconciliation in society, it is achievable when people have the truth ... We need to have opportunities for people to go through these processes. People firstly need the truth, and from getting that acknowledgment, they can decide where they want to take that next, what the next path should be for them. It cannot be one-size-fits-all approach to deal with the past. But, ultimately it must have an impact on the divisions that currently exist.

A community sector respondent issued a note of caution in relation to the issue.

Because the politicians took a leap of faith, it doesn't mean that the communities have. There is a lot of hurt around about how people can share power with people who have brought so much hurt to their doors.

Another from the community sector noted:

People have been left behind. There are huge levels of trauma within communities. There are damaged people, and communities have to deal with so many issues as a result – like aggression, like prescription drug use, like domestic violence. These things need to be addressed. Something needs to be done to deal with the past, but it needs to be independent and it needs to work.

The policy response in relation to broad issues of dealing with the past was strongly viewed as “lacking”. A number believe that an opportunity was lost with the lack of consideration given to the recommendations presented in the *Consultative Group on the Past* report, which one respondent described as having been “parked”. Another criticised the British and Irish governments for not showing sufficient leadership in addressing the legacy of the conflict, thus “retarding the whole good relations agenda, because they are so intertwined.” This statutory sector respondent noted: “It is a real pity that they cannot see this for themselves.” Another respondent simply noted that “in terms of dealing with the past issues, there has been no joined-up approach.”

Having raised the issue of the past with respondents, it was clear that no consensus exists as to the efficacy and impact of formal truth recovery processes, and the role it could play in the development of a ‘shared and better future.’ A community and voluntary sector respondent reflected:

I cannot see a process that would accommodate the needs of all groupings. People would become scapegoats. I would like to see a process in which all groupings – including churches and ex-combatants would have some input in to an acknowledgment process. The paramilitary organisations will not hang individuals out to dry. I would not advise people to input into some type of truth commission. There would be too much discrimination. It would be counter-productive and I am not sure that this society could survive it. I wouldn't want to destabilise the process when relationships are so fragile, but growing stronger. I wish there was some process that would satisfy the majority. Victims are seen as retarding progress. This is very negative view.

A number of respondents noted that they felt were gaps in the provision of services for victims/survivors, although on further questioning, specific examples were not provided. A number did note what they saw as competition for resources within the victims/survivors sector, with one describing it as “fragmented and mistrustful” and lacking “clear strategic focus”.

There is a noticeable lack of cohesion between providers in the areas of trauma, PTSD, etc. There is no cohesive, strategic approach in this area. This does bring you into the darker sides of society. There are still pockets of society that have no real perspective or sense of where we have reached so far, because of their own experiences. They are full of fear, paranoia and suspicion, which is understandable. The Victims Commission has been dealing with a lack of policy coherence, but you do not have a sense of leadership from them. This is not their fault, but their role was not thought through before they were appointed. It was a political issue and now it shows signs of this.

It appears from the responses provided on this area that the issue of how to deal with the past is still in its early stages of development and how this links with the development of a ‘shared and better future’ has not been clearly articulated or has not reached all sectors as yet.

Concluding Comments

The breadth of issues raised as outstanding challenges facing Northern Ireland's society appears daunting at first glance. However, the message from respondents appeared clear – that with strategic focus and political and community leadership, much can be achieved and will flow from the overall vision, if planned and resourced appropriately. As one respondent noted in relation to a specific issue, “[A]t least we can now see the knots and where the difficulties are ... Now we can think about how to unravel them.” The same appears to be true of the broader issues. In summary, the key outstanding challenge identified by the majority of respondents is in agreeing a broad vision and direction of travel, a set of aims and objectives and a realistic timeframe for progress. This is the work, not only of the political elite, but of a range of key influential actors, including grantmakers, practitioners and community leaders. Respondents previously noted the successes that have been achieved. They were clear, however, that, despite significant intervention, local ownership is still lacking in places. Dependency on external sources of support has resulted in an uneven community and voluntary sector, now heavily reliant on salaried employees. Intervention from a range of funding sources has produced some confusion and incoherence, as each grantmaker tends to define its parameters and

areas of focus individually, rather than as a collective intervention.

While respondents noted the outstanding issues still requiring attention, a number also made specific reference to geographical areas of particular concern. Some respondents work on a regional basis, and therefore appear to have an overview of where they felt a particular area-focus was required to implement change. Others work in particular geographical area and their responses, perhaps, reflect their local knowledge. Geographical areas mentioned as of specific concern for a number of respondents were: Rasharkin, the Craigavon/Lurgan/Portadown triangle, Omagh, Derry/Londonderry and North Belfast. These areas may all be easily identifiable to both policymakers and practitioners alike. However, it is interesting to reflect on the view of one respondent in relation to taking a specific geographical focus to interventions:

There are areas that are very silent. You cannot assume that just because there is not outright violence or tension that there are not underlying issues. There is no area which has been 'sorted out'.

It appears that the same could be said for the myriad issues identified by respondents which require attention and intervention.

6. Five Year Priorities

Having identified what was understood to be the outstanding issues in achieving good ‘a shared and better future’ for Northern Ireland, the final two research questions required respondents to identify which of these issues requires immediate attention and prioritisation over the next five years. Specifically, the two questions posed were:

- What are the priorities over the next five years in achieving a ‘shared and better future’?
- How can these priorities be achieved – particularly taking advantage of the current funding opportunities available?

While acknowledging that the work of developing a ‘shared and better future’ requires long-term intervention and generational commitment, the focus on the next five years was strategic and intentional. Northern Ireland stands at a pivotal moment in mapping out the direction of travel in terms of policy developments, practice interventions and grantmaking in the coming years. It has been widely acknowledged that external financial intervention has been hugely significant in shoring up the political agreements made and the peace built. Much of this external funding has been targeted at work within the community and voluntary sector and has contributed to the development of a corpus of knowledge, learning and experience regarding interventions required to address the multiple legacies of the conflict.

However, it is also widely understood that the level of external intervention in support of this work will be significantly reduced in the coming years, as priorities change, and attention shifts to other deserving regions. The current tranche of economic support provided by the EU PEACE Programme is due to complete in 2013, with no clear indication of whether future funds will be secured from this source. The level and extent of future interventions by the International Fund for Ireland are uncertain, while the independent funder, Atlantic Philanthropies, has a spend-down target of 2020. Added to this, the global economic downturn and recession has not escaped the region. Departmental budgets have been cut and resources are growing increasingly scarce. All the more pressing is the need to ensure efficient use of public funding and value-for-money in programming. In practice terms, there is growing recognition of the need to consolidate learning and to prepare the community and voluntary for the straitened economic period to come. The promise of a new policy framework for good relations in the coming months provides an opportunity for the identification and prioritisation of work for government departments and agencies, in collaboration with external partners.

It was clear during the course of the interviews undertaken that the majority of respondents found the prioritisation of issues and tasks to be particularly challenging. And yet, all recognised the need and value of such as exercise in order to focus energy and resources effectively and efficiently. Respondents noted that while planning for the next five years was helpful, it should only be viewed within a much broader strategic framework, with long-term, generational goals and objectives. The next five years, therefore, were recognised as being about laying down strong foundations for the future. The twelve most pressing priority areas noted below represent the themes and issues which were most frequently and most forcefully raised by respondents. Other specific areas of concern

identified by respondents, which include longer-term priority areas, are noted in the previous chapter and should also be borne in mind as issues requiring attention in the future.

1. Clearly articulate vision and direction of travel

The most pressing priority articulated by respondents was the urgent need for an agreed vision, direction of travel and clear cross-party commitment to support the development of a 'shared and better future'. This vision statement would require explicit agreement from the political parties as to their understanding of the issues to be addressed. It would clearly set out the overarching aims, objectives and outcomes and articulate the commitment required of the Executive to provide the financial resources to ensure its delivery.

As noted previously, many respondents expressed frustration with the framework proposed in the *CSI Consultation Document* which was released for public consultation during the period of this research. One respondent noted that, despite efforts to date, what is required is "... a serious internal analysis and debate within and between the main political parties" to ensure coherence and agreement on the key policy directives. This, another noted, requires "effective political leadership". He went on to say: "I do believe that this does exist. It is just that the legacy of the past means that everyone feels the must defend their position, rather than be seen to bend too far towards the other." A number of respondents noted that the financial implications of a strategic framework for action must also be detailed, so that the wider society can see the benefits of the approach agreed, and provide the necessary moral and practical support. This, it was noted, would benefit the political classes in the long-run, as their constituents will understand and be capable of identifying the impact of decisions taken on their own daily lives. One respondent put it thus:

In times we are in, it is hard to find chunks of money. While money is sometimes important, it is really an issue of leadership. It is about saying: this we can do. This we should do. This has practical benefits. The amount of money spent on division is unsustainable, as is the duplication and the multiple divisions of services. Our leadership needs to set out steps to save money. This requires ambition and leadership and telling people that it can be different, without you having to change your beliefs one iota.

One political respondent noted that "It all comes down to agreeing the strategy first. The only way you will know if any policy, intervention or programme is fit-for-purpose is to hold it up against the strategy. Create the vision first, then the short, medium and long-term strategies flow easily from that." While acknowledging that the *CSI Consultation Document* was intended to be an overarching agreed framework, respondents noted with dissatisfaction that the vision and aims of the document were unclear, and therefore an unstable foundation on which to develop a set of objectives, structures or programmes to deliver that aim. It was noted that agreement on both the meaning and application of key concepts, such as 'good relations', 'reconciliation', 'equality' and 'community development' is required to provide consistency and coherence to the structured and strategic approach outlined. Many of the respondents described the policy approach taken to date as "piecemeal" and "lacking strategy". The priority, according to a significant number of those interviewed, rests on the development of a coherent vision, driven not just by OFMdFM, but by each government department,

taking responsibility not only for their own portfolios of work, but remaining cognisant of the impact of their policy decisions on the broader societal picture.

2. Develop strategic agreement and practical implementation of cross-departmental working

Related to the previous priority identified, a significant number of respondents indicated that meaningful progress on the delivery of objectives set would only be possible with the development of smart and targeted ways of working across government departments. It was noted that the development of a coherent strategic framework, with agreed objectives and targets should go a substantial way to increasing activity within individual departments. However, it is the coordination of work between government departments that requires active intervention.

While acknowledging that the structures created under the power-sharing arrangements are challenging and complex, few believed that sufficient attention has been given to ensuring that good relations objectives are prioritised across government departments and agencies and that decisions made in one department are *complementary* rather than *contrary* to one another. The proposal for the establishment of a Ministerial Panel in the *CSI Consultation Document* was cautiously welcomed; on the proviso that it be afforded sufficient ‘teeth’ to ensure policy implementation and that each and every Minister takes responsibility to report on progress in relation to actions taken within their Departments. Concerns were raised that, currently, OFMdFM has overall responsibility for the reporting and delivery of good relations policies, yet has limited financial resources at its disposal. A significant number of respondents noted that the location of the Division with responsibility for ‘Good Relations and Reconciliation’ within the OFMdFM (Equality Directorate) has resulted in the issue being “sidelined” or “marginalised” and subject to tensions between the two main parties. A priority area identified is in the development of cross-departmental working practices which build on, and learn from, previous and existing structures, such as Ministerial working groups on North Belfast and Flags Monitoring, for example.

It was also recommended by a number of respondents that any inter-departmental structures established would include external input, on the understanding that not all information and expertise is available within the political sector or public service. Respondents noted that priority should be given to the identification of, and support for, external advice and information-giving structures to assist the inter- and cross-departmental mechanisms to function effectively. It was also noted that training and capacity-building for public officials to understand the outworkings of both the broad vision statement agreed, and the practical implications of delivery and measurement of specific measures within their own departments, may also be required.

3. Develop and strengthen coherent cross-sectoral collaborative structures

An associated priority identified was the strengthening of cross-sectoral and multi-agency working relationships in order to ensure effective delivery of objectives at political, statutory *and* community levels. While respondents acknowledged that a variety of multi-agency and cross-sectoral structures

do exist, they are often *ad hoc*, lacking in clear or specific terms of reference, are poorly attended or lack sufficient decision-making powers to ensure effectiveness. Sustainable, long-term and well resourced mechanisms formed around thematic issues or geographical areas would include relevant statutory agencies and government departments, external grantmakers, locally-elected representatives, among others. One respondent from the grantmaking sector noted:

Good relations will only work with strong networks. The community and voluntary sector is going to see mergers and closures in the coming years. Government departments are going to be squeezed in terms of resources and financial commitments. Statutory and non-statutory agencies will lose workers or will be fixated on delivering their key tasks, with no time to consider the impact on relationships more broadly. The concern is that these networks will be sidelined without the broad support of all to support them and resource them to do their work collaboratively, and therefore, more effectively.

Given that a range of cross-sectoral and multi-agency structures have been established as a result of specific funding interventions on sectoral or geographical basis, concerns were raised, by a number of respondents, as to their long-term viability, in the absence of a financial motivation to meet and work strategically and collaboratively together. It was recommended that a thorough audit of existing networking mechanisms should take place, with the objective of rationalisation, re-structuring and/or formalising of structures which currently exist and ensuring new provision for gaps in networking opportunities which would enhance the delivery of identified good relations objectives.

4. Consolidate roles and responsibilities of local government to deliver on good relations objectives

While a significant number of respondents spoke positively of the increasing recognition and responsibility taken by local government to support good relations in their boroughs, most indicated that further investment is required to ensure this work continues to be supported and developed, in both the immediate, and long-term. This includes a review and renewal of the District Council Community Relations Programme to make it appropriate and relevant for the current context.

A sizeable number of respondents indicated that local government should be further supported and encouraged to take on additional roles and responsibilities, as well as continuing with their current work, where it is successfully making changes to the local context. Respondents noted the significant learning that has been gained by councils – both elected representatives and officials – in addressing contentious and challenging issues and that this personal and institutional memory should not be lost as a result of poor planning at central government level, a lack of resources or deprioritisation of issues. As noted previously, respondents indicated their support for the work already achieved in a number of council areas, including the development of innovative programming, cross-council partnerships and collaborative working practices between the statutory and community and voluntary sectors. Those interviewed pointed to increasing confidence perceptible in local councils' abilities to deal with sectarianism, racism and relationship-building across deeply entrenched divides, which should be further supported in the immediate and long-term future.

5. Create effective coordination structures between funding streams

During the course of the interviews undertaken, many respondents referred to the variety of funding sources which have been available in support of good relations and reconciliation over the past decades. While acknowledging the importance and value of such financial support, many pointed to the varying priorities identified by funders, the overlapping work of grantmakers in particular areas, the myriad of reporting and evaluating mechanisms required and the challenges of managing a cocktail of funding, which varyingly supports either core or programmatic work, but seldom both successfully. A key priority identified was the need for greater communication and collaboration between funding sources, including those from central and local government, the European Union, the Irish government, lottery and charitable sources, international and private foundations, and the various other smaller pools of money that are distributed in Northern Ireland.

There was recognition that in this period of diminishing funding, greater coherence and collaboration is needed to ensure that resources are being utilised as efficiently and effectively as possible. While many areas of work can be identified as having an impact on 'good relations' work writ large, it appears that targeted funding, particularly focused on community and voluntary sector activity is often focused on geographical or thematic areas which is, at times, subject to the vagaries of local conditions, media attention or broader policy foci from central government. Given the straitened financial context, respondents were anxious that funding which is currently available to support good relations work and reconciliation processes is clearly targeted, efficiently used and complements and supports existing structures and processes. This, it was suggested, could be greatly enhanced by the development of more effective mechanisms for communication and information-sharing between both governmental and non-governmental funding sources.

6. Conduct broad-based review of what works and why

The need to understand the impact of programmes and initiatives was identified by the majority of respondents as a key strategic priority, which requires immediate action. Many noted that, despite a substantial investment of funding, resources and time in the development of programmes and projects, particularly at community level, there is still a dearth of evidence and overarching analysis of what has worked in terms of methodological approaches to the development of good relations in the region. A broad scale review of what has worked, and a matching of needs identified with activities and approaches proven to be effective, was proposed.

A sizeable number of respondents indicated that the evidence *should* exist about what has worked and yet, they struggled to identify where, or from whom, they should seek this information. Questions were raised as to why - given the extent of evaluation and auditing of projects undertaken and demands by government departments and external funding bodies to produce evidence of impact - detailed examples of effective practice, which have transferability and applicability to other contexts are not readily available. As noted previously, several respondents felt that evaluations conducted on individual projects were limited in usefulness, as they either failed to place the initiative under review within a broader context, lacked constructive critical engagement, failed to complete the evaluative cycle by contributing to the formative development of projects as they are conducted and reviewed, or were poorly disseminated on completion.

Respondents noted that, despite the quantity and quality of activity undertaken in the past decades, the lack of funding security has impacted on the institutional memory of projects. The focus on supporting 'pilot' projects and the encouragement of some funders towards new and innovative approaches has militated against the bedding-in of projects and their effective, long-term impact. The practicalities of how a proposed review of activities and interventions would take place, or how it would be resourced was not elucidated and requires further consideration. Respondents were clear, however, that this is an outstanding issue that requires attention, if we are in a position to clearly articulate what works, why and what should be supported in the future.

7. Develop over-arching strategy for work with children and young people

As noted previously, one of the most frequently referenced challenges to good relations and reconciliation was the attention given to the experience of the new generation of young people, and their relationship with the conflict and its ongoing legacies. The overarching priority identified by many respondents is the need for an overall strategic framework for work with young people, both within and outside of the formal education sector. This includes the development of strategically targeted resources that complement each other and are both multi-agency and multi-issue focused. Additionally, calls for a coordinated approach to youth intervention and investment in the development of youth leadership programmes were coupled with a proposal for the appointment of some form of "youth ambassador" who could address the "increasing bureaucracy and competition within the youth sector."

Respondents noted that the legacy of the conflict has resulted in many challenges for young people, including: a lack of opportunity to engage with those from other backgrounds and perspectives; ongoing fears of repercussion from particular markers of identity (such as school uniforms or football tops, for example); restricted movement to other areas due to perceived community background; reduction in life opportunities as a result of the segregated nature of the society. Concerns were expressed that individual government departments and agencies are making decisions on future programming based on economic imperatives, without taking full cognisance of the specific impact this will have on young people and their future within the region. In developing an strategic approach to youth provision, respondents indicated that an overarching review should be made of the contribution of the various service providers (schools, statutory youth sector and community-based youth sector) and to make available the various methodologies which has been undertaken to work towards good relations, equality and reconciliation objectives in order to ensure cross-sectoral learning and non-duplication of efforts.

8. Demonstrate active political support for integrated and shared education

A key priority identified for the next five years was a clearly articulated commitment from all political parties in support of the expansion of the integrated school sector and the further development of programmes which support collaborative working practices between schools located in proximity to one another. Respondents spoke of the need for political leaders to demonstrate both moral and practical support for the development of educational provision that allows for greater contact and engagement of young people from all communities.

This, it was argued, will require dialogue and collaborative working with a range of actors, including the Department of Education, the Education and Library Boards, churches and trade unions to ensure internal and external support. This would have a three-fold impact: reduction of the economic burden of supporting under-utilised or under-performing schools; mitigation of resource duplication within geographical areas; and provision of greater opportunities for cross-community contact in a structured and facilitated environment. The desire for greater cross-community contact was underpinned by economic arguments, identifying the significant savings which could be gained from increased sharing and amalgamation of schools, where practical. This, according to a number of research respondents, requires a broad review of how teachers are trained and supported to work within an integrated setting and that the taught curriculum reflects the needs of all young people, regardless of background or identity.

While it is acknowledged that financial assistance has been made available by external bodies to support greater collaboration within the formal education sector, priority must be given to ensure this is supported as a policy imperative, both for the individual department responsible and the Northern Ireland Executive as a whole. Respondents also supported the mainstreaming of externally supported programmes into formal public policymaking and implementation to ensure that change is being deeply embedded within educational structures.

9. Prioritise economic and social regeneration and investment and enhance opportunities for sharing

The increasingly straitened economic times were a consistent theme repeated during all interviews conducted. All respondents expressed acute awareness of the challenging economic conditions ahead and the strain this places on existing programmes, services and future investment. Party political differences were identified in approaches to addressing need and its correlation with the development of societal cohesion, sharing and integration. However, the majority of respondents emphasised the need to target resources at social policies which aim to address the regeneration of communities, tackle the multiple needs of individuals and communities living in socially deprived areas, urban and rural alike, and education and skilling of the workforce.

Direct linkages were made between issues of social deprivation, conflict, lack of social mobility and division. Economic and social priorities were identified by respondents, as they were viewed as vital to social stability, the enhancement of people's life opportunities and as an investment in the new generations' future. The majority of respondents were clear that, in order to effect real change in public spending, and counter the current duplication of services and provision to accommodate community divisions, all government departments and public bodies need to be embedded with a new culture which ensures that no new services are provided where access is not freely available to people from all communities. As one respondent, from the political sector noted:

Sharing will save money. We may need to invest in the short term but there will be longer term savings over time. This would be a much more efficient way of spending. Invest money in capital now. Spend to save later.

The research indicates that respondents are acutely aware of the need to more fully understand the current limitations on individuals and communities in terms of their ability to move freely, express their identity and feel secure and free from threat.

10. Prepare the community and voluntary sector for new economic and policy context

The significant reduction in financial resources available to the community and voluntary sector was identified as a specific issue requiring prioritisation and preparation work in the coming years. A number of respondents have noted that the non-statutory sector appears particularly ill-prepared for the challenging economic times which have resulted from the financial downturn, coupled with the predicted reduction in external funding from a variety of sources, which have previously supported good relations and reconciliation work in the region. Key priorities for the sector include the need for increased intra- and cross-sectoral collaboration and the rationalisation of services in order to ensure non-duplication and efficient utilisation of resources. This, it was noted, required the active engagement of umbrella structures and the effective management of existing geographic and sectoral networks and partnership arrangements.

Respondents noted positively the significant capacity and professionalism that exists within the sector, particularly among those engaged in work which impacts directly on good relations objectives. However, concerns were expressed that the reduction in financial resources available to the sector will result in a significant loss in skilled and experienced personnel in the coming years. Concerns were also raised about the increased levels of competition for funding within the sector which distracts from the core work of the organisation in delivering on its objectives. While mechanisms for information-sharing, networking and collaboration between and community and voluntary sector, relevant government departments and statutory agencies do exist, respondents indicated that a specific focus on the implication of a contracting community and voluntary sector on good relations and reconciliation in the region is urgently required.

11. Explore and test new opportunities for residential mixing

The persistent issue of segregation in housing was identified by many as a key priority area requiring strategic planning over the next five years. While no definitive view was expressed as to the level of intervention required to change the current patterns of division, a significant number of respondents called for a high level review of programmes of work to date and a specific policy commitment to ensure that future public housing is allocated on the basis of both equality of access, and need, with explicit commitments to safety and sharing as key objectives. In the short-term, respondents called for a detailed analysis of the challenge of breaking down existing patterns of segregation in both public and private housing stock and the robust commitment of a wide range of stakeholders, including political leaders, planners, landlords, developers and statutory and non-statutory agencies to work collaboratively to develop programmes of work which incentivise residents to create new housing patterns which encourage greater levels of contact, mixing and sharing across traditional divides.

12. Prepare for key commemorative events

Reflecting on the specific focus of this research, namely immediate good relations priorities, a small number of respondents identified the upcoming anniversaries of key historical events as an issue requiring particular attention and preparation. Respondents who raised the issue, acknowledged both the opportunities as well as the challenges of marking and commemorating events which have significance for one or other community in particular. Several spoke of the opportunities to acknowledge and re-visit events of the past within contemporary context and the possibility that it will open new spaces for engagement and dialogue between communities. However, a number also spoke of the perceived lack of preparedness of the society to manage the practical, financial and emotional issues which these anniversary events will raise. Of those respondents who raised the issue, all called for a strategic and inclusive approach to be taken to plan for the celebration and commemoration of events of special significance for communities in Northern Ireland, and for mature and non-confrontational approach to be taken by political and community leaders.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Northern Ireland is at an interesting juncture in its journey from conflict to sustainable peace. Previously, it appeared that the political and civic processes of peacemaking and peacebuilding were on different tracks, with one having only limited or uneven influence and impact on the other. The findings of this research point to a new reality – one in which the elected representatives are being held accountable by the wider society for the overall direction of travel and the key objectives to be attained to complete the new process of change which began with the 1998 Agreement. Civil society is calling on political elites to use the powers vested in them to provide leadership, and to continue to act as a model of what can be achieved at community level. Likewise, political leaders are calling on individuals, communities and institutions to articulate the change they wish to see and to give them guidance and support on the way forward. From the discussions which have taken place during the course of this research, it appears that there is a real appetite for consolidating learning, for creating meaningful structures that support policymaking and practice and for placing the issues of inter-communal divisions and the multiple legacies of conflict at the heart of every government department, agency and public body.

There are many recommendations for action embedded in the priorities identified by the informants to this research. Some are overarching, while others propose specific actions and activities which would support positive relationship-building and the process of reconciliation over the next five years. This report concludes with a broad set of recommendations, based not only on the research findings but on an analysis of the relevant literature, policy documents, media coverage and observations. A range of actors is required to affect this change, including local and regional political leaders, policy designers and policy monitors, individual government departments, local authorities, trades unions, churches, practitioners, community workers and grantmakers. Their roles and responsibilities overlap and share common ground.

Eight key recommendations for the next five years are detailed below. Each recommendation is intentionally broad and strategic in focus, highlighting the importance of building strong foundations upon which more effective work will logically develop and progress over time. Each recommendation should be viewed holistically and individual stakeholders should consider the specific contribution they can make to their successful delivery.

1. Embrace the language of profound change

The task of moving a society on from the economic, social and psychological causes and consequences of the conflict, while tackling the insidious legacy of division requires ambition, commitment and courage. Local political leaders have demonstrated these qualities regularly over the past two decades. That being said, much work remains and the challenges can appear daunting. It is not a time to be tentative or hesitant in defining the task ahead. Progress is not assisted by the use of confused and vague language which clouds our vision as to the goal to be achieved. The Declaration of Support section of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement recognises the impact of the conflict on the society. It reads: *“The tragedies of the past have left a deep and profoundly regrettable legacy of*

suffering. We must never forget those who have died or been injured, and their families” It goes on to establish the goal to be achieved: *“But we can best honour them through a fresh start, in which we firmly dedicate ourselves to the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust, and to the protection and vindication of the human rights of all.”* (1998: 2)

Clear and unequivocal language is required to define both the process and the desired outcome. The language of reconciliation used by the Agreement clearly articulates the depth and breadth of change required. It encompasses a vision of the future, while recognising the hurts, losses and suffering of the past. It understands that, as a process, a commitment to equality, human rights, inclusion, and good relations is required. The right language, if precisely articulated, places responsibility on all individuals and institutions to contribute to the greater whole. By adopting the vision of reconciliation, the 1998 document provided coherence to the process of building a ‘shared and better future’ for all. Words used without explanation or definition can lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding. Broad agreement on terminology allows all involved to move towards the same objectives, based on an understanding of the goals to be achieved and the component parts which will lead us to that path. Responses submitted to the consultation on the framework for *Cohesion, Sharing and Integration* reiterated the need to restore the language of reconciliation to the centre of government policymaking. It is recommended that serious consideration be given to a process of understanding and defining a clear vision for a ‘shared and better future’ and articulating it through the language of reconciliation. This language was embedded in the Agreement, and continues to have resonance within wider society to the present day.

2. Adopt a strategic framework for action and a significant commitment of resources

With urgency, the Northern Ireland Executive should adopt a comprehensive framework for action to address the challenge of reconciliation for the society as a whole. While recognising that actions are also required beyond the remit of public policy, the *CSI Consultation Document* provided an opportunity for the devolved administration to articulate an effective framework of structured action for the delivery of a ‘shared and better future’. While acknowledging that the proposed framework is only the first step in the development of a comprehensive strategy and action plan, it has been a tentative and faltering process thus far. A detailed programme of action is required, within which societal problems are clearly identified, solutions and outcomes are clearly articulated and objectives and targets are set with agreed timeframes for completion. This framework should set out a clear elaboration of programmes of work to fulfil objectives and targets, establish all of the mechanisms and structures necessary to implement them, and outline a clear process through which progress is monitored, assessed and revised. Adequate and additional resources to fulfil the aim and objectives of the programme should be clearly considered, detailed and placed within the broader understanding that short-term additional expenditure will lead to long-term savings when intended objectives are met. In devising a comprehensive policy and strategic framework, consideration should be given to the greater coherence that might be achieved from the adoption of the Hamber & Kelly (2005) working definition of reconciliation in shaping the various components which require prioritisation and attention. An engagement with a more structured understanding of the detail required for a reconciliation process following violent conflict could provide greater lucidity and synergy to the range of individual actions, contributing more effectively and strategically to a greater whole.

3. Create efficient and meaningful structures through which progress can be achieved

Affecting profound change in a society emerging from violent conflict requires a set of delivery structures and mechanisms, established to ensure that positive progress can be achieved and measured. At public policy and implementation level, the commitment of each government department and relevant public body to work towards the vision and objectives articulated in an overarching policy framework is required. This report endorses the recommendation of the draft *CSI* document to establish a Ministerial Panel, led from the centre. The proposed Panel will be required to have sufficient authority and clout to set ambitious targets for action, identify and allocate resources, and impose measures and sanctions to ensure delivery of objectives within agreed timeframes. The nature of the reconciliation process requires the development of complex sets of relationships of cooperation and collaboration. Cross-departmental working practices should be supported and enhanced. The ring-fencing of dedicated funds to support the development of collaborative projects and greater 'joined-up' and effective programming should be considered. Cross-departmental cooperation is fundamental to the delivery of effective public policymaking and service delivery and should be viewed as core – not additional or periphery – to the work of all government departments.

The process of reconciliation does not rest solely within the remit of legislation and public policy, however. It also requires the development of a complex set of collaborative working relationships and practices between a whole range of statutory and civil society actors. These relationships require attention and nurturing, with formal structures established through which they can acquire form, particularly at the early, tentative stages. The Community Relations Council and the District Council's Community Relations Programmes have been essential mechanisms through which these relationships have been built and nurtured at local and regional levels, and both have clearly demonstrated their value and impact in this regard. As with all bodies and structures, their mission and objectives should be subject to revision and renewal. This report supports a review of the fundamental function and purpose of the Community Relations Council, undertaken swiftly and efficiently. It recommends that this review is predicated on an acceptance of the importance of a dedicated, strategically-focused regional body (both symbolically and practically) that can retain both challenge and innovation functions and act as a central hub for partnership-building, knowledge exchange and critical dialogue and reflection. It is also recommended that any review of the District Council's Community Relations Programme takes account of its inception and evolution over time and the progress made at individual council level, which requires continued support and investment. The review should measure the Programme not solely on its significant impact to date, but also its possible impact, had it been afforded increased prioritisation and financial support in recent years.

Based on the findings of the research undertaken, it is also recommended that a workable structure is created to include departments, agencies, programmes and independent trusts which provide financial resources to support good relations and reconciliation work at sectoral and community levels. While acknowledging that structures and mechanisms for information exchange, networking and collaboration do exist on an *ad hoc* basis, a more systemised approach may lead to greater efficiencies, particularly with regard to the diminishing funds from European and international sources, vital within the current economic climate. This recommendation recognises the need for private foundations and trusts to maintain independence of decision-making. However, it also notes that when working within the public realm on affecting social change, it must take cognisance of other dynamics at play and seek to work collaboratively to ensure coherence rather than competition.

4. Develop greater understanding of what works and why

Despite significant investments of time and resources over many years, gaps in our knowledge as to 'what works' in relation to approaches and methodologies to support reconciliation processes have clearly be identified. The research evidence points to a lack of clarity as to why certain methods have been adopted in particular circumstances, what the impact of specific practices is over others, and whether different outcomes could have been achieved by the implementation of alternate policies or interventions. While acknowledging the need to continue with work currently supported, there is merit in 'taking stock', assessing the knowledge, skills and resources developed to date, and undertaking a comprehensive review of what works in progressing reconciliation objectives, in what circumstances, and with what outcome and impact. Despite the extensive monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects, detailed examples of effective practice, which have applicability and transferability to other contexts still requires systematic documentation and dissemination. A well designed process, which returns to fundamental questions such as: What is the issue/challenge/problem which has been identified? What evidence is there that this particular issue required attention? What change is required? What is the rationale or 'theory of change' which underpins the approach taken? What skills and resources are required to affect this change? What is the timescale for change expected? How will we know when the objective has been achieved? What are the external consequences to affecting change in one area and how can this change be sustained over time?

In the first instance, it is recommended that a broad-based working group representing government departments, relevant agencies, the Community Relations Council, funding bodies, researchers and evaluators, and community practitioners be convened to define the parameters of such work, isolate a methodological approach, identify the resources required and define a timescale for delivery. In order to avoid duplication and repetition of work previously conducted, the review should be informed by prior studies, both locally and internationally and be focused on delivering results which will shape future reconciliation processes. The review should result in a detailed understanding of the various political, social, economic and psychological changes required to contribute to sustain a process of reconciliation; a detailed analysis of the range of methodologies and approaches which will contribute to affecting positive change; and a set of intuitive and flexible measurement and evaluation tools to ensure documentary evidence of impact. This should culminate in the development of an effective and adaptable mechanism for dissemination of learning and methodologies which can support the recurrent need for revision and refreshment of ideas and approaches, as the context continues to develop and change.

5. Integrate and mainstream options which support integration

The major faultlines of inter-communal division in Northern Ireland society have been clearly identified. They exist within current patterns of housing, the formal education system, some workplaces, religious and cultural practices and social, sport and play activities. Political consensus may not have been reached as to the causes of these cleavages, the process by which they should be addressed, or the extent to which they require active intervention. However, the economic and social impacts have been acknowledged by parties. Some sectors have recognised the profound effects of separation and have focused efforts on breaking down the traditional lines of separation between communities, with varying degrees of impact. Substantial progress has been stymied by a range

of complex and inter-related factors, including: embedded historic patterns of division which resist movement; reluctance of institutions to change existing practices; lack of political and community leadership to articulate the benefits of integration, fear and mistrust of the 'other'; 'chill factors' which hinder the development of confidence in one's own sense of safety; and limited resources to make the physical and systemic changes required to embed new patterns of interaction and integration.

While recognising the role of a range of diverse actors including churches, community and voluntary sector organisations, employers and sporting and cultural bodies in supporting new patterns of integration, the evidence to date points to the need for additional legislative tools and public policies to act as levers for substantive change. Over the next five years, it is recommended that, with the explicit support and commitment of the Northern Ireland Executive, all responsible government departments and public agencies identify the legislative and policy levers required to affect real change to the current and persistent patterns of segregation. The evidence exists of the positive impact of contact on breaking down mistrust, suspicion and fear between divided communities. Demonstrable examples of effective mixing in housing, education, employment, sports and cultural and social events now exist, often persisting over decades in spite of challenging external factors. It is time to move beyond anecdotal examples which continue to be exceptions to the broader rules, to strategic interventions which provide opportunities for the development of relationships embedded in individuals' and families daily lives and interactions. It is recommended that, rather than departments and agencies continuing to send mixed messages that imply support for cross-community activities through funding of pilot initiatives or short-term projects, the Northern Ireland Executive takes the ambitious and courageous decision to make fundamental public policy decisions that place integration at the heart of government objectives, including the Programme for Government.

6. Articulate link between good relations, reconciliation and dealing with the past

For too long 'dealing with the past' has been treated as a separate, often mechanistic process involving specific structures, actions, objectives and constituencies, disengaged from the wider good relations and reconciliation objectives in Northern Ireland. Grant schemes and public policies developed since the 1998 Agreement have tended to equate 'dealing with the past' issues with the needs of victims/survivors of the conflict. While it is imperative that the impact of the conflict on those most deeply affected continues to be addressed, this approach limits our vision of what 'dealing with the past' can and should entail. Effectively addressing the past should require us to consider the impact of the past on the whole society (and beyond) and to understand how the past affects the present and the ongoing relationships between, and within, communities. The reasons for the disaggregation of dealing with the past from broader reconciliation objectives may have been political, financial and/or practical. It may also reflect the approaches taken by academics and policymakers, both locally and internationally and their views and judgements on how, when and why societies should deal with the various legacies of violent conflict. However, in the Northern Ireland context this has proven problematic as there is, therefore, no clear expression of the link between the impact of dealing with the past (or not) and the active process of building relationships in a deeply segregated society.

What is required is a clear articulation of the connections, commonalities and intersections between dealing with the past and broader reconciliation processes at individual, community, political and

societal levels. This should replace the current siloing of dealing with the past and relationship-building processes into separate grant programmes, policy documents and community projects. In continuing the development of a framework and action plan for the development of a 'shared and better future', the report of the Consultative Group on the Past should be revisited and cross-referenced to ensure coherence and consistency of approach and objectives. While acknowledging that processes of 'dealing with the past' are sensitive and require the engagement of those most directly affected by the conflict, creating a false sense of separateness between the processes of building good relations and dealing with the past can only serve to hinder the effectiveness of both.

7. Seize the opportunity presented by upcoming commemorations to make space for engagement, dialogue and learning between communities

The forthcoming decade will be marked by a series of political and social anniversaries which have particular resonance and significance for individuals and communities in Northern Ireland. To a greater or lesser extent, a range of historic events have contributed to the shaping of the sense of Irish and British identities on these islands. The commemoration of key dates and events in the coming years could serve to invoke a renewed sense of individual and group identity or reinforce a sense of 'otherness' or difference. It could also serve to highlight or emphasise a sense of commonality and collective experience, not previously articulated. While every individual, community and grouping has the right to privately commemorate historic events as they choose, consideration should be given as to how the process of commemoration and remembrance of past events occurs within the public space, defined broadly. This period provides an exceptional opportunity to engage in new processes of dialogue and engagement within and between communities around the symbolic meaning of key historic dates, their cultural and political impact, the legacy of significant events on the dynamics of current attitudes and relations, and the opportunities to revisit and revise previous held opinions, perceptions and attitudes towards the 'other'.

In relation to commemoration in the public realm, it is recommended that new lines of communication, dialogue and partnership are developed between key actors, including the British and Irish governments, devolved government departments and agencies, local authorities, community, cultural and arts organisations, museums, academics and the media. These connections should serve to explore the challenges and opportunities arising from the forthcoming period of commemoration and remembrance. The work of the Steering Group on commemoration within the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and the development of a Commemorative Strategy is welcome in this regard, as is the work of the Community Relations Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund in supporting and encouraging dialogue and action on these issues. In supporting the process of developing greater 'cohesion, sharing and integration' in the society and respecting the values these processes require, it is recommended that this key period is viewed as an opportunity to create new ways of working, foster greater and deeper understanding within and between communities, develop new opportunities for dialogue, and to acknowledge diversity, difference and interdependence. In practical terms, it is recommended that all stakeholders begin a process of knowledge gathering as to how individuals, groups and communities wish to commemorate the events of the past and agree ways in which this can be achieved, taking into account existing legislation, public order restrictions and norms related to events in public space. At a grantmakers level, it is recommended that potential

funding of commemorative events is assessed so as to take into account an agreed set of principles which will serve to support, rather than hinder reconciliation processes. At a civic and community level, it is recommended that cultural identity is presented as a fluid and progressive process. As such, this upcoming period of anniversaries should be viewed as an opportunity to create new fora of dialogue and debate, education and information sharing, and cross-community collaboration and partnership building.

8. More effective utilisation of existing information, statistics and research data

Research and data collection on the causes, consequences and long-term impacts of the conflict has been relatively well resourced in Northern Ireland. Government departments, academic grant sources, the EU PEACE programmes and trust funds have all supported academic and community based research over the past decades. A significant body of literature and resources now exists which can be drawn upon and utilised to inform both policy and practice work. In addition, rafts of international literature on conflict, reconciliation and peacebuilding contribute to the corpus of knowledge available. While acknowledging that not all research is of sufficient precision or rigour for consideration, it is disappointing that quality work undertaken is either inaccessible or found to have little practical utility in informing the development of reconciliation policy or practice initiatives. Effective utilisation of relevant research data requires a two-way process of engagement. Research institutions, government and non-governmental research units, and individual researchers have a responsibility to ensure the effective dissemination of their research data and analysis, in ways which are both physically and intellectually accessible to their target audience. On the other hand, those with responsibility for policymaking, project planning and decision-making have a responsibility to ensure that they are fully informed of the existing information and analysis available to them, undertaken by those with expertise in that area, and to assess how this data can effectively inform their own judgements and decision-making. It is recommended that further exploration of the processes through which research and information collected on themes of significance to reconciliation processes is disseminated and made use of. In doing so, blockages that exist between the collection of quality data and its potential utility for relevant audiences can be identified and addressed and new ways forged which satisfy the needs and expectations of both the research and policy and practice communities.

Bibliography

- Acheson, N., Cairns, E., Williamson, A., Stringer, M., (2006) *Voluntary Action and Community Relations in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: NICRC.
- Acheson, N., Williamson, A., Cairns, E. & Stringer, M. (2007) *Voluntary action and community relations in Northern Ireland*. Coleraine: University of Ulster.
- Agreement Reached in the Multiparty Negotiations (1998) Belfast: The Stationery Office.
- Atkinson, M., Springate, I., Johnson, F. & Halsey, K. (2007) *Inter-school collaboration: a literature review*. Slough: NFER.
- Bell, J., Jarman, N. & Lefebvre, T. (2004) *Migrant workers in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research.
- Bell, J. (2007) *Interface issues - an annotated bibliography*. Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research.
- Bell, J. (2007) *Parades and Protests: An Annotated Bibliography*. Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research.
- Bell, J., Hansson, U. & McCaffery, N. (2010) *'The Troubles Aren't History Yet'. Young People's Understanding of the Past*. Belfast: NICRC.
- Bell, J., Jarman, N. & Harvey, B. (2010) *Beyond Belfast - Contested Spaces in Urban, Rural and Cross Border Settings*. Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research.
- Beyers, M. (2009) 'Pandora's Box? Engaging with our pasts: initial explorations from the victims sector and republican community'. *Shared Space*, Issue 8, October 2009. Belfast: NICRC.
- Bryan, D. & Gillespie, G. (2005) *Transforming conflict: Flags and emblems*. Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University Belfast.
- Bryan, D., Stevenson, C., & Gillespie, G. (2007) 'Flagging Identities: assessing the display and regulation of political symbols across Northern Ireland' *Shared Space*, Issue 4, June 2007. Belfast: NICRC.
- Bryan D., Stevenson C., Gillespie G. (2009) *Flags Monitoring project 2008 Interim Report*. Belfast: OFMDFM.
- Bryan, D., Stevenson, C., Gillespie, G. & Bell, J. (2010) *Public Displays of Flags and Emblems in Northern Ireland Survey 2006-2009*. Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University Belfast.
- Bryan, D., Stevenson, C., Gillespie, G. & Bell, J. (2010) *Public Displays of Flags and Emblems in Northern Ireland: Survey 2006-2009*. Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, QUB.

- Byrne, J. (2005) *Interface Violence in East Belfast during 2002: The impact on residents of Short Strand and Inner East Belfast*. Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research.
- Byrne, J. (2009) 'Policing Loyalist and Republican Communities: Understanding key issues for local communities and the PSNI' in *Shared Space*. Issue 7, January 2009. Belfast: NICRC.
- Byrne, J., Conway, M. & Ostermeyer, M. (2005) *Young People's Attitudes of Policing, Violence and Community Safety in North Belfast*. Belfast: Northern Ireland Policing Board.
- Byrne, J., Hansson, U. & Bell, J. (2006) *Shared Living: Mixed Residential Communities in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research.
- Byrne, J. & Monaghan, L. (2008) *Policing Loyalist and Republican Communities: Understanding key issues for local communities and the PSNI*. Belfast: NICRC.
- Byrne, J. & Wilson, C. (2007) 'Eleventh Night Bonfires: managing and exploring issues around cultural diversity and good relations' in *Shared Space*, Issue 4, June 2007. Belfast: NICRC.
- Cairns, E., Campbell, A., Hewstone, M. & Hughes, J. (2007) 'Segregation in Northern Ireland: Implications for Community Relations Policy'. *Policy Studies*, 28 (1). pp. 35-53.
- Cairns, E., Campbell, A., Hewstone, M. & Hughes, J. (2008) 'What's there to fear? A comparative study of responses to the out-group in mixed and segregated areas of Belfast.' *Peace & Change*, 33 (4). pp. 522-548.
- Cairns, E., Hewstone, M., Kenworthy, J.B., Tausch, N., Hughes, J., Tam, T., Voci, A., Hecker, Von U. & Pinder, C. (2008) 'Stepping Stones to Reconciliation in Northern Ireland: Intergroup Contact, Forgiveness, and Trust' in Nadler, A., Malloy, T. & Fisher, J.D. (eds.) *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Reconciliation*. Oxford Scholarship Online Monographs, pp. 119-227.
- Cairns, E., Hughes, J., Hewstone, M., Tausch, N. & Schmid, K. (2008) 'The effects of living in segregated vs. mixed areas in Northern Ireland: a simultaneous analysis of contact and threat effects in the context of micro-level neighbourhoods.' *Journal of Conflict and Violence*, 2 (1) pp. 56-71.
- Cairns, E., Hewstone, M., Hughes, J., Jenkins, R., Schmidt, K. & Campbell, A. (2008) *Social Identity and Tolerance in Mixed and Segregated Areas of Northern Ireland*. Swindon: Economic and Social Research Council.
- Cairns, E., Marinetti, C., Geddes, L., Parkinson, B., Kenworthy, J.B., Hewstone, M. & Tam, T. (2008) 'Postconflict reconciliation: Intergroup forgiveness and implicit biases in Northern Ireland.' *Journal of Social Issues*, 64 (2), June 2008, pp. 303-320.
- Cairns, E., Kenworthy, J., Hewstone, M. & Tam, T. (2009) 'Intergroup trust in Northern Ireland'. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 35 (1). pp. 45-49.
- Cairns, E., Schmid, K., Hewstone, M., Hughes, J. & Jenkins, R. (2009) 'Residential Segregation

and Intergroup Contact: Consequences for intergroup relations, social capital and social identity' in Wetherell, M. (ed.) *Theorising Identities and Social Action*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cairns, E. & Niens, U. (2005) 'Conflict, contact, and education in Northern Ireland.' *Theory Into Practice*, 44 (4). pp. 337-338.

Clancy, MA. & Nagle, J. (2010) *Shared Society or Benign Apartheid? Understanding Peacebuilding in Divided Societies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (2009) *Good Practice in Community Development*. Belfast: CFNI.

Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (2010) *From Prison to Peace: Learning from the Experiences of Political Ex-Prisoners: A Learning Resource*. Belfast: CFNI.

Community Relations Council (2005) *A Shared Future: From Consultation to Action*. Belfast: NICRC.

Community Relations Council (2006) *Sharing over Separation*. Belfast: NICRC.

Connolly, P. & Healy, J. (2004) *Children and the conflict in Northern Ireland: The experiences and perspectives of 3-11 year olds*. Belfast: OFMDFM.

Consultative Group on the Past (2009) *Report of the Consultative Group on the Past*. Belfast: CGPNI.

Conway, M. & Byrne, J. (2005) *Interface Issues: An Annotated Bibliography*. Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research.

Corden, A. & Sainsbury, R. (2006) *Using verbatim quotations in reporting qualitative social research: researchers' views*. Social Policy and Research Unit: University of York.

Deloitte (2008) *The Implication of Providing Shared Services in a Divided City*. Belfast: Belfast City Council.

Department of Employment and Learning, NI (2009) *The Experiences Of Migrant Workers In Northern Ireland*. Belfast: DELNI.

Department of Employment and Learning, NI (2009) *Attitudes to Migrant Workers: Results from the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey*, December 2009. Belfast: DELNI.

Devine, P. & Schubotz, D. (2010) 'Caught up in the past'? The views of 16-year olds on community relations in Northern Ireland' in *Shared Space*, Issue 10, November 2010. Belfast: NICRC.

Dickson, D. & Hargie, O. (2006) 'Sectarianism in the Northern Ireland workplace' in *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 17, pp 45-66.

- Dickson, D., Hargie, O. & Wilson, N., (2008a). 'Communication, Relationships and Religious Difference in the Northern Ireland Workplace: A Study of Private and Public Sector Organizations', *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, Volume 36, Issue 2, pp. 128-160.
- Dickson, D., Hargie, O., O'Donnell, A. & McMullan, C. (2008b) *Learning to deal with difference in the workplace*. Jordanstown: University of Ulster.
- Dickson, D., Hargie, O., O'Donnell, A. & McMullan, C. (2009) 'Adapting to Difference: Organisational Socialisation in the NI Workplace.' In *Shared Space*, Issue 7, January 2009. Belfast: NICRC.
- Donnan, H. & Simpson, K. (2007). 'Silence and Violence among Northern Ireland Border Protestants'. *Ethnos*. 72 (1): 5-28.
- Donnell, N. & Cox, C. (2007) *Flags Audit and Household Survey*. Derry/Londonderry: St Columb's Park House.
- Donnelly, P. (2006) 'Interfaces' in Community Relations Council for Northern Ireland (ed.) *Sharing Over Separation – Actions towards a Shared Future* Belfast: NICRC.
- Donnelly, C. & Gallagher, A.. (2008) *School Collaboration in Northern Ireland: Opportunities for Reconciliation*. Belfast: School of Education, Queen's University of Belfast.
- Doyle, J. (ed.) (2010) *Policing the Narrow Ground: Lessons from the transformation of policing in Northern Ireland*. Royal Irish Academy.
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2007) *Promoting Good Relations – A Guide for Public Authorities*. Belfast: ECNI.
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2008) *Promoting Good Relations – A Summary Guide for Public Authorities*. Belfast: ECNI.
- Ewart, S. & Schubotz, D. (2004) *Voices Behind the Statistics: Young People's Views of Sectarianism in Northern Ireland*. London: National Children's Bureau.
- Foley, F. & Robinson, G. (2004) *Politicians and Community Relations in Northern Ireland*. Derry/Londonderry: INCORE, University of Ulster.
- Gaffikin, F. & Morrissey, M. (2006) 'Planning for Peace in Contested Space', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 30 (4), pp.873-893.
- Gaffikin, F., Sterrett, K., McEldowney, M., Morrissey, M. & Hardy, M. (2008a) *Planning Shared Space for a Shared Future*, 2008: Belfast: NICRC.
- Gaffikin, F., McEldowney, M., Rafferty, G. & Sterrett, K. (2008b) *Public Space for a Shared City*. Belfast: Belfast City Council.

- Gaffikin, F. & Morrissey, M. (2011) 'Community Cohesion and Social Exclusion: Unravelling a Complex Relationship.' *Urban Studies*. May 2011, Vol 48, No. 6, pp. 1089-1118.
- Gallagher, A.M. (1995) 'The Approach of Government: Community Relations and Equity', in S. Dunn (ed.) *Facets of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*. St Martins Press, New York.
- Gallagher, A., Stewart, A., Walker, R., Baker, M. & Lockhart, J. (2010) 'Sharing Education through schools working together' in *Shared Space*, Issue 10, November 2010. Belfast: NICRC.
- Ganiel, G. (2010) 'Surveying Religion's Public Role: Perspectives on Reconciliation, Diversity and Ecumenism in Northern Ireland', *Shared Space*, Issue 9, March 2010. Belfast: NICRC.
- Geoghegan, P. (2010) 'The Search for Equality: Race, Religion and Public Policy in Northern Ireland' *Shared Space*. Issue 9, March 2010. Belfast: NICRC.
- Gilligan, C., Hainsworth, P. & McGarry, A. (2008) 'Questions and Answers: comparing the attitudes of elected representatives, political party supporters and the general public towards minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland.' *Shared Space*, Issue 6, 2008. Belfast: NICRC.
- Gilligan, C. & Lloyd, K. (2006) *Racial Prejudice in Northern Ireland: Research Update No. 44*, ARK, June 2006.
- Gilligan, C. (2008) *Migration and migrant workers in Northern Ireland: Research Update No.53*, ARK, February 2008.
- Goldie, R. & Ruddy, B. (2010) *Crossing the Line: Key features of effective practice in the development of shared space in areas close to an interface*. Belfast: Ros Goldie Partnership/Belfast Interface Project.
- Goldie, R. & Ruddy, B. (2011) 'Developing Good Practice in Promoting Shared Space at Interfaces' in *Shared Space*, Issue 11, March 2011. Belfast: NICRC.
- Good Relations Forum (2010) *Ensuring the Good Relations Work in our Schools Counts - A Strategy to meet our needs for the 21st Century*. Belfast: NICRC and ECNI.
- Good Relations Associates (2007) *Embedding Good Relations in Local Government: Challenges and Opportunities*. Belfast: ECNI.
- Gormally, B. (2008) *Building a New, Inclusive Society – An Action Plan for the Trade Union Movement in A Sustainable Peace: Research as a Contribution to Peace-Building in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: NICRC.
- Gormally, B. & McEvoy, K. (2009) *Dealing with the Past 'from below': An Evaluation*. Belfast: CFNI.
- Green, R., White, I., McGearty, S. & Macaulay, T. (2005) *Research on the Current Provision of North South School and Youth Exchange and Cooperative Activity*. Dundalk: NSEC.

Groundwork NI (2006) *Changing Places Changing Minds*. Belfast: Groundwork.

Hamber, B. & Kelly, G. (2005a) *A Place for Reconciliation? Conflict and Locality in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Democratic Dialogue.

Hamber, B. & Kelly, G. (2008) 'The Challenge of Reconciliation: Translating Theory Into Practice' in *A Sustainable Peace: Research as a Contribution to Peace-Building in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: NICRC.

Hamber, B. & Kelly, G. (2009) 'Beyond Coexistence: Towards a Working Definition of Reconciliation' in Quinn, J. (ed.) *Reconciliation(s): Transitional Justice in Postconflict Societies*. McGill-Queen's University Press: Montreal CA.

Hamilton, J., Bell, J. & Hansson, U. (2008) 'Sectarianism and Segregation: Impact on Everyday Life' in *Shared Space*, No 6 June 2008. Belfast: NICRC.

Hamilton, J., Bell, J., Hansson, U. & Toucas, S. (2008) *Segregated Lives: Social Division, Sectarianism and Everyday Life in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research.

Hamilton, J. & Camplisson, S. (2007) 'Who Cares? The experience of ethnic minority healthcare staff in Northern Ireland'. *Shared Space*. Issue 4, June 2007. Belfast: NICRC.

Hansson, U. (2005) *Troubled Youth? Young People, Violence and Disorder in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research.

Harland, K. (2009) 'From Conflict to Peacebuilding: Reflections and Descriptions of Youth Work Practice in the Contested Spaces of Northern Ireland'. *Youth & Policy*, 102 p 5 – 19.

Harland, K. & McCready, S. (2010) 'Stuck between Ceasefires and Peacebuilding: Finding Positive Responses to young men's experiences of violence'. *Shared Space*, Issue 10. Belfast: NICRC.

Harvey, B. (2010) Baseline Paper: Sharing our space - overcoming division in rural communities: the experiences of the border counties. Belfast: RCN/CRC.

Haydon, D. & Scraton, P. (2008) 'Conflict, Regulation and Marginalisation in the North of Ireland: The Experiences of Children and Young People' *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, Vol. 20, No. 1, July 2008, pp 59-78.

Hayes, B.C. & McAllister, I. (2009). 'Religion, Identity and Community Relations among Adults and Young Adults in Northern Ireland'. in *Journal of Youth Studies*, Volume 12, Issue 4, pages 385-403.

Hayes, B.C., McAllister, I. & Dowds, L. (2006) *The impact of integrated education on political attitudes in Northern Ireland: Research Update (42)* Belfast: ARK.

Healing Through Remembering (2005) *Storytelling audit: An audit of personal story, narrative and testimony initiatives related to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland*. Belfast: HTR.

Healing Through Remembering (2006a) *Making Peace with the Past: Options for truth recovery regarding the conflict in and about Northern Ireland*. Belfast: HTR.

Healing Through Remembering (2006b) *The Viability of Prosecution Based on Historical Enquiry: Observations of Counsel on Potential Evidential Difficulties*. Belfast: HTR.

Healing Through Remembering (2006c) *Acknowledgement and its role in Preventing Future Violence*. Belfast: HTR.

Healing Through Remembering (2006d) *International Experiences of Days of Remembrance and Reflection*. Belfast: HTR.

Healing Through Remembering (2006e) *Day of Reflection: A Scoping Study*. Belfast: HTR.

Healing Through Remembering (2008) *Evaluation of the Healing Through Remembering Day of Private Reflection on 21 June 2007*. Belfast: HTR.

Healing Through Remembering (2009a) *Ethical Principles – Storytelling and Narrative Work*. Belfast: HTR.

Healing Through Remembering (2009b) *Evaluation of the Healing Through Remembering Day of Private Reflection on 21 June 2008*. Belfast: HTR.

Healing Through Remembering (2010) *Evaluation of the Healing Through Remembering Day of Private Reflection on 21 June 2009*. Belfast: HTR.

Healy, J. (2006) 'Locality Matters: Ethnic Segregation and Community Conflict-the Experience of Protestant Girls in Belfast' in *Children and Society*, Volume 20, pages 105-115, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Hewstone, M., Tausch, N., Hughes, J., & Cairns, E. (2008) *Can contact promote better relations? Evidence from mixed and segregated areas of Belfast*. Belfast: OFMDFM.

House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee. (2006) *The Challenge of Diversity: Hate Crime in Northern Ireland: Government Response to the Committee's Ninth Report of Session 2004-2005 [HC 396]*. London: House of Commons.

ICR and Trademark (2008) *Fears, Constraints and Opportunities: Developing Shared Residential Space*. Belfast, Belfast City Council.

Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland. (1999) *A New Beginning: Policing in Northern Ireland - The Report of the Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland.

- Integrated Education Fund (2010) *Developing the Economic Case for Shared Education*. Oxford: Oxford Economics.
- Irvine, C. & Schubotz, D. (2010) *Youth Volunteering: Making a Difference to Community Relations, Research Update 69*. Belfast: ARK.
- Jarman, N. (2005a) 'Changing Places, Moving Boundaries: The Development of New Interface Areas.' In *Shared Space*, No. 1, 2005.
- Jarman, N. (2005b) *No longer a problem? Sectarian violence in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research.
- Jarman, N. (2005c) *Changing Patterns and Future Planning: Migration and Northern Ireland*. Institute for Conflict Research Working Paper No. 1. Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research.
- Jarman, N. (2006a) *Working at the Interface: Good Practice in Reducing Tension and Violence*. Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research.
- Jarman, N. (2006b) 'Peacebuilding and Policing: The Role of Community-based Initiatives' in *Shared Space* No 3 November 2006. Belfast: NICRC.
- Jarman, N. (2008) 'Security and Segregation: Interface Barriers in Belfast.' In *Shared Space* No 6, June 2008. Belfast: NICRC.
- Jarman N. & Byrne J. (2007). *New Migrants and Belfast An Overview of the Demographic Context: Social Issues and Trends*. Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research.
- Jarman, N. & Monaghan, R. (2004) *Racist harassment in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research.
- Jones, P. & Boujenko, N. (2011) 'Rethinking Transport and Connectivity for a Shared City' in *Shared Space*, Issue 11, March 2011. Belfast: NICRC.
- Kelly, G. (2006) *Community Engagement, Good Relations and Good Practice*. Belfast: Belfast City Council.
- Kelly, G. & Hamber, B. (eds.) (2005) *Reconciliation: Rhetoric or Relevance?* Belfast: Democratic Dialogue.
- Knox, C. & Hughes, J. (1996) *Community Relations: A Research Review*. Centre for Research in Public Policy and Management. Jordanstown: University of Ulster.
- Knox, C. & Quirk, P. (2000). *Peace Building in Northern Ireland, Israel and South Africa*. London: Macmillan.
- KPMG (2010) *Research and Evaluation of Youth Intervention Schemes*. Belfast: KPMG/OFMDFM.

- Leighton, A. (2011) *Community-Police Relation Issues: A Select Annotated Bibliography, Version 2*. Derry/Londonderry: INCORE.
- Leonard, M., (2008) 'Building, Bolstering and Bridging Boundaries: Teenagers' Negotiations of Interface Areas in Belfast' in *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Volume 34, Issue 3, pages 471-489.
- Lewis, H. (2006) *Trends in Community Development*. Derry/Londonderry: INCORE.
- Lloyd, T. (2009) *Stuck in the Middle: Some young men's experiences of violence, conflict and safety*. Centre for Young Men's Studies: University of Ulster.
- Lloyd, K and Robinson, G. (2008) *Catholic-Protestant relationships in Northern Ireland, Research Update No. 54*. Belfast: ARK.
- Lundy, P. and McGovern, M., (2005) *Community, Truth Telling and Conflict Resolution: A Critical Evaluation of the Role of Community Based Truth Telling Processes in Post Conflict Transition*. Belfast: NICRC.
- Lundy, P & McGovern, M. (2006) *A Truth Commission for Northern Ireland? Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey: Research Update 46*. Belfast: ARK.
- Lundy, P & McGovern, M. (2006) 'The Ethics of Silence: Action research, community truth-telling and post-conflict transition in the North of Ireland', *Action Research*, Vol 4, No. 1, 2006, pp49-64
- Lundy, P. and McGovern, M. (2008) Attitudes Towards a Truth Commission for Northern Ireland in *A Sustainable Peace: Research as a Contribution to Peace-Building in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: NICRC.
- Macaulay, T., (2006) *Faith Based Youth Work in Northern Ireland*, Belfast: YouthNet Faith Based Interest Group.
- MacBride, D. (2008) *Good Practice in Conflict Transformation*. Belfast: Belfast City Council.
- Mac Ginty, R. & du Toit, P. (2007) 'A Disparity of Esteem: Relative Group Status in Northern Ireland after the Belfast Agreement', in *Political Psychology*, Volume 28, Issue 1, pages 13-31, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Inc.
- Magill, C., Smith, A. & Hamber, B. (2010) *The Role of Education in Reconciliation*. UNESCO Centre, Coleraine: University of Ulster.
- Manktelow, R. (2007) 'The Needs of Victims of the Troubles in Northern Ireland: The Social Work Contribution' in *Journal of Social Work*, Volume 7, Issue 1, pp. 31-50. London: SAGE Publications.
- Martynowicz, A. & Jarman, N. (2009). *New Migration, Equality and Integration Issues and Challenges for Northern Ireland*. Belfast: EQNI.

- McAlister, S., Scraton, P. and Haydon, D. (2009) *Childhood in Transition: Experiencing Marginalisation and Conflict in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Queen's University, Save the Children, The Prince's Trust.
- McAlister, S., Scraton, P. and Haydon, H. (2010) 'Insiders' and 'Outsiders': Young People, Place and Identity in Northern Ireland', *Shared Space*, Issue 10, November 2010.
- McCaffery, N. & Hansson, U. (2011) 'The Troubles Aren't History Yet: Young People's Understanding of the Past' in *Shared Space*, Issue 11, March 2011. Belfast: NICRC.
- McCartney, C. (2003) *International Review of Public Policies towards Improving Inter-Community Relations*. Derry/Londonderry: INCORE.
- McCready, A. (2008) *A Fund of Goodwill: The Story of the International Fund for Ireland*. Belfast: IFI.
- McDougall, B. (2007). *Support for Victims and Survivors: Addressing the human legacy* (Report of the Interim Commissioner for Victims Survivors), 25 January 2007. Belfast: Interim Commissioner for Victims Survivors.
- McDowell, S. (2007) 'Victims' needs in post-conflict Northern Ireland: an analysis of government policy between 1997 and 2007'. (Published on CAIN)
<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/victims/policy/smcd07victimsneeds.html>
- McEvoy, K. & Shirlow, P. (2008) *Beyond the Wire: Ex-prisoners and Conflict Transformation in Northern Ireland*. London: Pluto Press.
- McEvoy, K. & Shirlow, P. (2009) 'Reimagining DDR: Ex-combatants, leadership and Moral Agency in Conflict Transformation.' *Theoretical Criminology*, 13,1 pp. 31-59.
- McEvoy-Levy, S. (2006) *Troublemakers or Peacemakers? Youth and Post-Accord Peace Building*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- McGlone, E. & Stinson, J. (2006) *Who Cares for the Carers?: A Study into Issues Affecting Carers of Victims of the Northern Ireland Conflict*. Belfast: NICRC.
- McGlynn, C., Niens, U., Cairns, E. & Hewstone, M. (2004) 'Moving out of Conflict: The Contribution of Integrated Schools in Northern Ireland to Identity, Attitudes, Forgiveness and Reconciliation', in *Journal of Peace Education*, Vol. 1, Issue 2, pp. 147-163.
- Mitchell, C. (2008). 'The Limits of legitimacy: Former Loyalists Combatants and Peace-Building in Northern Ireland' in *Irish Political Studies*, Vol. 23 (1) pp.1-19.
- Morrow, D. (2008) 'Shared or Scared? Attitudes to Community Relations Among Young People 2003-07' in Schubotz, D. & Devine, P. (eds.) *Young people in post-conflict Northern Ireland*. Dorset: Russell House Publishing.
- Morrow, D. (2006) 'Sustainability in a Divided Society: Applying Social Capital Theory to Northern Ireland'. In *Shared Space*. Issue 2, 2006. Belfast: NICRC.

- Murphy, J. (2010) 'Organisational Change under Environmental Pressure: Policing Change in Northern Ireland.' *Shared Space*, Issue 9, March 2010. Belfast: NICRC.
- Murtagh, B. & Shirlow, P. (2006) *Belfast: Segregation, Violence and the City*. London: Pluto Press.
- Nagle, J. (2009) Developments in Government Policy, 2005-2009. (published on CAIN) <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/victims/policy/jn09policy.html>
- NCB NI & ARK YLT (2010) *Attitudes to Difference: Young People's Attitudes to and Experiences of Contact with People from Different Minority Ethnic and Migrant Communities*. London: NCB.
- Nolan, P. (2010) 'The Leaders We Deserve?: Leadership and Community Relations'. *Shared Space*, Issue 9, March 2010. Belfast: NICRC.
- Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma and Transformation (2008) *Trauma, Health and Conflict*. Omagh: NICTT.
- Northern Ireland Executive (2008) *Programme for Government 2008-2011*. Belfast: HSMO.
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive (2006) *A Good Practice Guide to Flags, Emblems and Sectional Symbols*. Belfast: NIHE.
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive (undated) *Northern Ireland Housing Executive Shared Neighbourhood Programme*. Belfast: NIHE.
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive (2008) *Building Safer Communities: Northern Ireland Housing Executive Safer Communities Strategy 2008-2011*. Belfast: NIHE.
- Odhiambo, E. (2008) 'Africans in Northern Ireland, West of the Bann: A Preliminary Perspective.' *Shared Space*. Issue 5, March 2008. Belfast: NICRC.
- OFMDFM (2005) *Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2010*. Belfast: OFMDFM.
- OFMDFM (2005) *A Shared Future: Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: OFMDFM.
- OFMDFM (2006) *A Shared Future: First Triennial Action Plan 2006-2009: Improving Relations in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: OFMDFM.
- OFMDFM (2007) *A Shared Future and Racial Equality Strategy: Good Relations Baseline Indicators Report*. Belfast: OFMDFM.
- OFMDFM (2007) *Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report*. Belfast: OFMDFM.
- OFMDFM (2009) *Good Relations Indicators 2008 Update*. Belfast: OFMDFM.

OFMDFM (2009) *Strategy for Victims and Survivors*. Belfast: OFMDFM.

OFMDFM (2010) *Good Relations Indicators 2009 Update*. Belfast: OFMDFM.

OFMDFM (2010) *Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Consultation Document*. Belfast: OFMDFM.

OFMDFM (2011) *Good Relations Indicators 2010 Update*. Belfast: OFMDFM.

Osborne, B. (2004) *Fair Employment in Northern Ireland: a generation on*. Belfast: Blackstaff Press & the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Porter, F. (2009) 'From Divided to Diverse Society: Reflections on Sectarianism and Social Diversity from the Churches Sector' *Shared Space*, Issue 7, January 2009. Belfast: NICRC.

Potter, M. (2004) *In Their Own Words: A Research Report into the Victims Sector in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Training for Women Network.

Radford, K., Hughes, J., Murphy, P., Donnell, N., Murphy, J. & Osborne, P. (2009) 'Fields, Flags and Future Sharing: an overview of the rural perspectives on community relations', *Shared Space*. Issue 8, January 2009. Belfast: NICRC.

Radford, K. & Templer, S. (2008) 'Women and Relationships: experiences from the 'victims' sector' in *Shared Space*, Issue 6, June 2008. Belfast: NICRC.

Radford, K., Betts, J. & Ostermeyer, M. (2006) *Policing, Accountability and the Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research.

Rolston, B. (2006) 'Dealing with the Past: Pro-State Paramilitaries, Truth and Transition in Northern Ireland'. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 28(3), pp. 652-675.

Rural Community Network (2010) *Sharing over Separation – a rural perspective*. Cookstown: RCN.

Russell, D. (2005) 'Belfast: Strategies for a Shared City'. In *Shared Space*. Issue 1, 2005. Belfast: NICRC.

Schmid, K., Hewstone, M., Tausch, N., Cairns, E. & Hughes, J. (2009) 'Antecedents and consequences of social identity complexity: Intergroup contact, distinctiveness threat, and outgroup attitudes'. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 35 (8).

Schubotz, D. & Devine, P. (2005) *What Now? Exploring Community Relations among 16-year olds in Northern Ireland: Research Update* (34). Belfast: ARK.

Schubotz, D. & Robinson, G. (2006) *Cross community integration and mixing: does it make a difference? Research Update*. (43). Belfast: ARK.

- Schubotz, D. & McCartan, C. (2008) *Cross-Community Schemes: Participation, motivation, mandate: Research Update* (55). Belfast: ARK.
- Schubotz, D. & Devine, P. (eds.) (2008) *Young people in post-conflict Northern Ireland*. Dorset: Russell House Publishing.
- Scraton, P. (2007) 'Children, young people and conflict in the north of Ireland' in P. Scraton (ed.) *Power, Conflict and Criminalisation*. London: Routledge.
- Scraton, P. (2006/7) 'Children, Violence and Transition' *Criminal Justice Matters*, No. 66, Winter.
- Shirlow, P. (2006) 'Segregation, ethno-sectarianism and the 'new' Belfast' in Cox, M., Guelke, A., & Stephen, F. *'A farewell to Arms? Beyond the Good Friday Agreement'* (2nd Edition) Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Shirlow, P., Graham, B., McEvoy, K., Ó hAdhmaill, F. & Purvis, D. (2005) *Politically Motivated Former Prisoner Groups: Community Activism and Conflict Transformation*. Belfast: NICRC.
- Shirlow, P., Graham, B., & McEvoy, K. (2008) 'Former Political Prisoners and Conflict Transformation' in Community Relations Council (ed.) *A Sustainable Peace: Research as a Contribution to Peace-Building in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: NICRC.
- Shirlow, P., Tonge, J. & Mcauley, J. (2010) *Abandoning Historical Conflict? Former Political Prisoners and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Social Information Systems (1994) *A Review of Community Relations Research in Northern Ireland* Cheshire: SIS Ltd.
- Social Research Centre & Associates (2009) *Initial Literature Review of The Needs of Victims & Survivors*. Belfast: CVSNI.
- Special European Union Programmes Body (2007) *PEACE III EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation 2007-2013, Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland: Operational Programme*. Belfast: SEUPB.
- Templer, S. & Radford, K. (2007) *Hearing the Voices - Sharing perspectives in the victim/survivor sector*. Belfast: NICRC.
- Wallace Consulting (2011) *Programme for Sharing, Cohesion and Integration Consultation Analysis*. Portadown: Wallace Consulting.
- Watt, P. & McGaughey, F. (eds.) (2006) *Improving Government service delivery to minority ethnic groups*. Belfast: OFMDFM.
- Wilson, R. (2006a) *What works for reconciliation?* Belfast: Democratic Dialogue.
- Wilson, R. (2006b) 'What works for reconciliation?' in *Shared Space*, Issue 3, 2006. Belfast: NICRC.

Appendix – List of Research Respondents

Martina Anderson, MLA	Sinn Fein
Pat Colgan	SEUPB
Bob Collins	Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
Jill Crawford	Business in the Community
Michael Culbert	Coiste
Sue Divin	Derry City Council
Michael Doherty	Suffolk Lenadoon Interface Group
Stephen Farry, MLA	Alliance Party
Sylvia Gordon	Groundwork NI
Joy Hadden	Rural Development Council
Jennifer Hawthorne	NI Housing Executive
Michael Hughes	Rural Community Network
Richard Irwin	OFMdFM
Dolores Kelly, MLA	SDLP
Avila Kilmurray	Community Foundation for Northern Ireland
Nicola Lane	Craigavon Borough Council
Olivia Leslie	Department. of Foreign Affairs, Irish Government
Emma Little	OFMdFM
Sinead McShane	Southern Education and Library Board
Duncan Morrow	NI Community Relations Council
Quintin Oliver	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Jackie Patton	Ballymena Borough Council
Dawn Purvis, MLA	Independent MLA
Ciaran Quinn	OFMdFM
Norma Rea	Youth Council NI
Jim Rea	Kilcooley Community Forum
Paul Roberts	Ashton Community Trust
Tom Roberts	EPIC
Bill Shaw	174 Trust
Peter Sheridan	Cooperation Ireland
David Wall	Department of Social Development

Organisational affiliation at time of interview indicated.

INCORE Logo by Designer, Helen Averley



Description of Logo

On first glance the INCORE Roundel looks complex but harmonious. On closer inspection it becomes discordant. The patterns which are interwoven in the Roundel represent the rich diversity of cultures and ethnic groups around the world. These artistic forms of expression reflect the complexity of the societies who created them. Patterns have symbolically marked out cultural territory, be it through body painting, textiles or architecture. However, the colourful patterns in the Roundel find themselves clashing. This disharmony represents the friction that can arise between close neighbours. Flash points and areas of conflict are depicted by barbed wire and other violent forms. Both the symbols of conflict and those celebrating ethnicity are here bound inside the circle. The circle, in a sense like the earth is a complete unit, but it has a limited space which all elements are forced to share.

Societies can be reconciled to co-exist amicably and in mutual respect but this does not always occur; here lies the need for an initiative.

INCORE

University of Ulster
Magee Campus
Aberfoyle House
Northland Road
Derry/Londonderry
BT48 7JA
Northern Ireland

Tel: +44(0)28 71675500
Fax: +44 (0)28 71675510
E-mail: incore@ulster.ac.uk

www.ulster.ac.uk/incore

ISBN: 978-1-85923-250-7